THE LAND OF THE SPIRIT

THOMAS NELSON PAGE

CORNELL
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

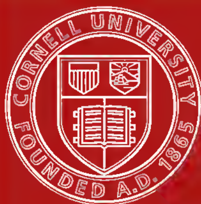
BOUGHT WITH THE INCOME
OF THE SAGE ENDOWMENT
FUND GIVEN IN 1891 BY
HENRY WILLIAMS SAGE

Cornell University Library
PS 2514.L25 1913

The land of the spirit,

3 1924 022 147 460

olin



Cornell University Library

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924022147460

BOOKS BY THOMAS NELSON PAGE

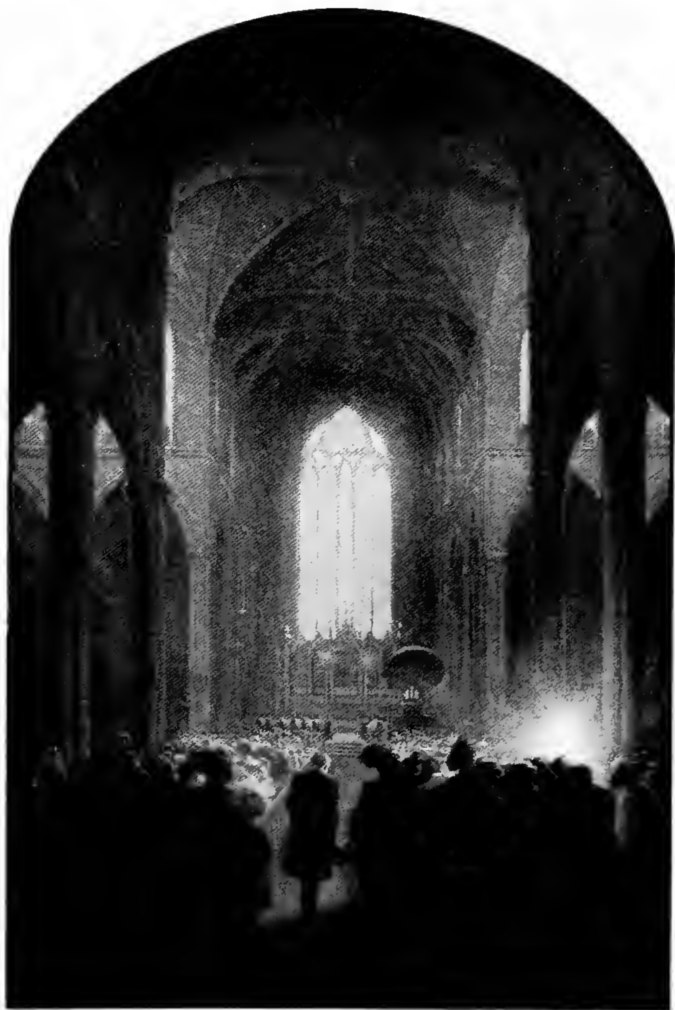
PUBLISHED BY CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

THE LAND OF THE SPIRIT. Illustrated. 12mo *net*	$1.20
JOHN MARVEL, ASSISTANT. Illustrated. 12mo .	1.50
GORDON KEITH. Illustrated. 12mo	1.50
RED ROCK. Illustrated. 12mo	1.50
ON NEWFOUND RIVER. Illustrated. 12mo . .	1.50
THE OLD GENTLEMAN OF THE BLACK STOCK. Illustrated. 12mo	1.50
IN OLE VIRGINIA. 12mo	1.25
The Same. Illustrated. Crown 8vo	2.50
UNDER THE CRUST. Illustrated. 12mo	1.50
BRED IN THE BONE. Illustrated. 12mo	1.50
THE BURIAL OF THE GUNS. 12mo	1.25
PASTIME STORIES. Illustrated. 12mo	1.25
ELSKET, AND OTHER STORIES. 12mo	1.00

ROBERT E. LEE, MAN AND SOLDIER. Crown 8vo . . . . *net*	2.50
THE OLD DOMINION: HER MAKING AND HER MANNERS. 12mo . . . . *net*	1.50
THE OLD SOUTH. 12mo . . . . *net*	1.25
SOCIAL LIFE IN OLD VIRGINIA BEFORE THE WAR. Illustrated. 12mo . . . . *net*	1.50
THE NEGRO; THE SOUTHERNER'S PROBLEM. 12mo . . . . *net*	1.25
THE COAST OF BOHEMIA. 12mo . . . . . *net*	1.00
"BEFO' DE WAR." By A. C. Gordon and Thomas Nelson Page. 12mo . . . . *net*	1.00

SANTA CLAUS'S PARTNER. Illustrated. 12mo . .	1.50
AMONG THE CAMPS. Illustrated. Square 8vo . .	1.50
TWO LITTLE CONFEDERATES. Illustrated. Square 8vo	1.50
TOMMY TROT'S VISIT TO SANTA CLAUS. Illustrated. 12mo	1.00
A CAPTURED SANTA CLAUS. Illustrated. 12mo .	.75

THE LAND OF THE SPIRIT



The Stranger

The Land of the Spirit

By

THOMAS NELSON PAGE

ILLUSTRATED

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
NEW YORK : : : : : : : 1913

A 916118
73
S

Copyright, 1913, by
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

Published April, 1913

Preface

Possibly the most notable one change in our national life in the last decades is the deepening of its note. Whereas formerly attention was given largely to things of the surface, of late the mind has been directed more to those things which lie beneath. A whole realm has been opened up for consideration and for work. Duty to God and duty to our neighbor have come almost suddenly to assume a new and personal meaning, springing unexpectedly into a new relation to our life. And we find the universal mind turning with serious heart-searchings to a frank facing of the divine commandments. Out of this fresh moral consciousness have grown most of the new moral movements in our day, and much the larger part of the spiritual forces that have had their birth in our time. From taking thought only of the things of the

body we have come to ponder the treasures of the soul, and the new light has shown us that the field is no longer confined to a future state in some distant heaven, but lies here actually in our midst.

These stories have been brought together under their present title as in some sort reflecting glimpses of this new Land of the Spirit. Several of the stories are so based on actual incidents as to be almost historical in form, while others are less specifically realistic. But it is hoped that all may be recognized as typical of true conditions.

"The Stable of the Inn" is to some extent based on the Golden Legend. The idea of "The Old Planters'" was first suggested by a charming story entitled "The Passing of Falstaff," which was read long ago in an old magazine which it has been vainly sought to identify that acknowledgments might be made to its author. "The Bigot" and "The Trick Doctor" were based on incidents related to me by friends. "The Shepherd Who Watched by Night" belongs partly to the same class with these

and falls in partly with those yet to be mentioned. It is real enough to be a transcription of fact and universal enough to be found by any one who cares to open his eyes. One Church is mentioned; but all may be signified. "The Stranger's Pew" and "The Outcast" reflect phases of life unhappily universal, as any one may see who is not wholly blind. The latter story was written prior to the appearance of the play, "Madame X," founded on the same theme. It has never been published before.

THOS. NELSON PAGE.

March 4, 1913.

Contents

	PAGE
The Stranger's Pew	3
The Old Planters'	17
The Stable of the Inn	82
The Shepherd Who Watched by Night	107
The Bigot	133
The Trick–Doctor	187
The Outcast	234

Illustrations

The Stranger . . . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

She treated him as an indulgent mother treats a feeble child 66

Behind them streamed the mingled traffic of a road that led to a great city 84

It was, then, not a dream. This was the sign unto them 104

"What are you doing here?" he asked 124

I assured him that I was deeply interested, and he told me his curious story 154

At the moment he was making slow passes with his hands 204

Simon shifted uneasily in his seat 228

THE LAND OF THE SPIRIT

THE STRANGER'S PEW

The church-bells were ringing loudly, and the bells of St. ——'s Church were giving forth a particularly deep and resonant tone, which set the frosty morning air to throbbing. It was a fine chime, and the parishioners were justly proud of it. The tune the bells rang now was, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." The broad street on which the church faced was full of shining vehicles: automobiles, with fur-clad chauffeurs, and carriages with well-groomed horses prancing in the chill air. The sidewalks, which in the sunshine were covered with a sort of slush from the now melting snow, were alive with well-dressed men and richly dressed ladies who moved decorously toward the handsome stone portal, above which carven saints, who had lived holy lives, stood in stony repose. With solemn mien the worshippers entered, exchanging with acquaintances tempered salutations or fragmentary

bits of news, bowing to the bowing vergers, who obsequiously showed them up the dim aisles to their seats in cushioned pews, where they settled themselves with an air of satisfaction. Each pew contained a plate or card engraved with the name of the owner.

As the congregation passed in, off to one side, in a shadow beneath the gargoyles, which, with satanic rage graved in their stone faces, appeared as if trying to spring down from the eaves on the heads of the church-goers, stood a person gravely observing those who entered the church. His garb was poor and he was manifestly a stranger in that section. He had come immediately from the lower part of the town where, a little while before, he might have been found in a group about a rusty street-preacher, whose husky voice, as he tried to tell the throng about him of heaven and the kingdom of God, appeared to excite their amusement. Oaths and foul language were freely passed among them; yet when the preacher ended, a few of them moved off

with serious faces, and one or two of them stopped and offered their pennies to a blind beggar working at a wheezy accordion. The stranger joined the preacher and walked away with him as if they had been friends, and when he left him he turned toward St. ——'s, whose bells were just beginning to peal. He accosted one of the passers-by with the words, "Whose church is this?" "This is Doctor ——'s church," said the gentleman as he passed on. The stranger moved a little away—out of the shadow to where the sunlight fell, and looked long and curiously at the building. Another person as he passed him and followed his glance said: "A fine church. It's the finest in the city." The stranger, however, did not appear to hear. He only shivered slightly. His worn clothing was so thin as to appear wholly unsuitable to the winter temperature, and his shoes showed his bare feet through their gaping sides. His face was grave, and marked as if by want or sorrow. His eyes, deep sunken as with care, were habitually cast down, and his shoulders

stooped as though he had long borne heavy burdens. He might, but for his gentle expression, have been a workman out of work, who had known better days, but his countenance, as he talked to some little children who had stopped by him, was kind and gentle, and had something childlike in it. As he stood talking with and enjoying them, a number of the church-goers observed him and, after a consultation, one turned back and said something to the children in a commanding voice, at which they started and ran off, looking back, now at the stranger and now at the gentleman, who still remained in sight as if to see that his orders were obeyed. The stranger too gazed after the children, as if in a sort of pleasant dream. From this he was aroused by another church-goer with an official mien, who, after a casual glance at him, paused at the threshold and then turned back. In his gloved hand he carried a small gold-headed cane, as fine as a reed, with which he pointed at the stranger as he approached him, and called in a tone of authority:

"Don't hang around the church— Go on." So the stranger kept on until he had crossed the street, when he turned just in time to see the gentleman enter the church. As the latter passed a bowing usher he paused to say: "I am expecting friends in my pew to-day—Lord and Lady —— [the name was lost], so do not show any strangers to it." The usher bowed. Close on his heels came another who said: "No strangers in my pew, they annoy me." "Yes, sir," bowed the usher. At that moment a poor woman, dressed like a widow, in a thin, shabby, black dress, long worn threadbare, and with shoes old and broken, passed by, and entering the church stood in the aisle just within the door, timidly waiting to be allowed to sit down in one of the empty pews. The official-looking gentleman passed her, apparently without looking at her; but as he passed a verger he said to him, with a jerk of the head: "Give her a seat; don't let people block up the aisles." The verger turned back and said to the woman, in the same tone the other had used: "Sit

there, and don't block up the aisle." He indicated a seat in a pew near the door, and she sat down coughing. Her cough was bad, and it appeared to irritate the verger. Every time he returned from showing some one to his pew he kept looking at her with an expression of disapproval, and presently he walked up to her and said: "You had better sit in that side-pew. Perhaps you will not cough so much there." He pointed to the first pew at the side, under a gallery. The widow thanked him, and, trying to stifle her cough, moved to the other seat.

A little later the sound of the processional came through the closed door, and the stranger, outside, returned to the church, and, as if half timidly, entered the vestibule by a door beside the main entrance. The vestibule was empty. He stopped long enough to read the inscription on a memorial tablet, declaring that the church was erected to the glory of God, and in memory of some one whose name was almost indecipherable. Then he glanced at the

list of pew-holders, in a gilded frame, containing many names, though there was still room for others. He tried to open the heavy middle door, but it appeared to have caught fast; for a drop of blood trickled down as he stopped and gazed around. Finally, after some apparent irresolution, he entered the church by a small door at the side of the vestibule. The church was a large one and very richly ornamented. The fine, stained-glass windows represented a number of scenes taken from Bible history, most of them, indeed, from the life of our Lord—there was the annunciation; the scene in the stable at Bethlehem; the healing of Jairus's daughter; the raising of Lazarus; and over the high altar, on which burned brightly a number of candles, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. The church was so large that even with the congregation that had entered, many of the pews were yet unoccupied. In one or two of them was a card bearing the word: "Reserved." The congregation was praying as he entered—at least, some were; the priest

was reading a confession, and they were following the words, some as they gazed around, others with bowed heads. Near the door, in pews, were a few shabbily dressed persons.

After a glance of interest at the windows, followed by a moment of irresolution, the stranger moved up to where gaped a number of empty pews; but even in the dusk of the church the eye of a verger was too sharp for him, and as he started to take his seat the verger, with a gesture and a word, halted him. "These pews are all taken—you must stand till after the second lesson." He indicated the open space near the door, and the stranger, as if abashed, moved haltingly back. It was the first time he had showed a lameness. He stood near the door while the service proceeded, and listened to the fine choir singing and chanting to the strains of a great organ, wonderfully played. Once or twice vergers came silently down the aisle, when some one of the congregation entered late, and rather scowled at him for standing in the way. But when the "sec-

ond lesson" was ended, the verger either forgot the stranger, or missed him; so he continued to stand, though from his expression he appeared to suffer from pain, and now and then shifted his pose wearily. Only once he smiled. It was when, after a telling notice of the needs of the parish by the white-robed priest, and a high tribute to the generosity of the people, a company of gentlemen in kid gloves passed down the aisles, with large silver platters, and took up the offertory, while the well-trained choir sang a voluntary of much intricacy—a part of which ran, "How beautiful are the feet of them who bring the glad tidings!" and as one of the collectors passed near him, the old woman in black, with the bad cough, tremblingly put in two cents. The collector wore a set and solemn expression of severe virtue, quite as he had done outside the church when he had ordered the little children off. But the stranger smiled at the old widow. The old woman caught his eye upon her and, moving up a little, made a place beside her which he took with a

smile of thanks. As he passed the collector he reached out his hand over the plate, but whatever he put in it fell so softly as to make no sound. The collector turned without looking at him and placed his hand mechanically over the plate to press down the loose notes. Just then the choir ceased singing, the collectors formed in line and marched up the aisle, standing in a line while the collection was poured jingling from one plate into another. Then the priest received it, turned and marched to the altar, and while he held it aloft the congregation sang, "All things come of thee, O Lord, and of thine own have we given thee." The old woman stood up, but could not sing; she only coughed.

When the service was over the congregation, fur-clad and cheery, poured out of the church, greeting each other with words or smiles somewhat measured, entered their luxurious vehicles, and drove off. The stranger in the pew near the door, with a smile of thanks as the poor widow, with her racking cough, passed quietly out, followed her

and crossing the way stood for a moment in the shadow, as if observing the congregation; then, as the vestryman who had ordered him off before the service appeared, he turned and disappeared in the direction which the widow had taken toward the poorer part of the city. She was picking her way slowly along the sidewalk when she heard his voice, offering his arm to support her. Her shoes were old and worn in holes, and let in the icy water; but she appeared not to mind it. Her interest was in the stranger.

"Why, you are almost barefooted!" she exclaimed in a pitying voice.

"Not any more than you," he smiled.

"Why, your feet are actually bleeding!" she argued.

"Old hurts," he answered her. "The church was cold."

"Yes, it was cold near the door," she coughed. "You must come in and let me see what I can do for you."

He smiled his thanks.

"You must come in and let me make you a cup of hot—something, I will make up my

fire at once." She was going to say "hot tea," but she remembered she was out of tea.

"A cup of water would do for me," said the stranger.

She was at her door now, and her hands were cold as she fumbled at the lock, and as she turned after entering to call him in, he had disappeared. She made her way up to her little, cold, back room and sat down, shivering and quite out of breath. The coal was out, so she could not make a fire, but she wrapped herself up as well as she could and presently forgot her cold and hunger in sleep.

As the official-looking man lifted his hand on his way home his wife said, "Why, your hand has blood on it!" He glanced at it with annoyance. "It must have come from that money. I thought that person's hand was bleeding."

"Whose?" demanded his wife.

"Oh, a stranger who was hanging around the church."

It was not long afterward that, in the poor part of the little town, in a very small

and dingy house, and in a little back bedroom of that house, a sick woman lay dying. The doctor who had attended her, sent by a charity organization connected possibly with St. ——'s, had just left her side and stood on a little dark landing outside the door, which was slightly ajar, speaking in a professional tone to a white-habited nurse, who also had been furnished by the charity organization.

"Well, there is nothing further to be done," he said as he drew on his right glove.

"No, sir."

"How long did you say the coma has lasted?"

"All day."

"She will not rally again; you know what to do when it is over?"

"Yes, sir." It was all professionally kind.

Just then a murmur came from the dying woman within, and nurse and doctor, moved by professional instinct, stepped softly back to the bedside. Some change had taken

place in the patient. Her worn face had changed. A new light had fallen on it. "He is coming!" she murmured. "Oh, the glory!—You!" she exclaimed. "You!—Lord— It was nothing— How beautiful are the feet!"

Her head turned slightly on the pillow, and a subtle smoothing came over her face. The doctor instinctively laid his hand on her. "She is gone," he said; "I knew she would." But he little knew how.

THE OLD PLANTERS'*

I

THE time when "The Old Planters'" first opened was a date so far back that the memory of man runs not to the contrary. It must, from its name, have been in the "ante-bellum," or, as the old colonel used to say, "antediluvian," period, when the wealthy planters passed up and down the country on their way back and forth from their rich rice and cotton plantations on the sluggish rivers to the mountains. Its name denoted it; its ample rooms, carved mantels, and heavy wainscot, long eaten of rats, and its fine old classical portico—all testified to a colonial or post-colonial period, contemporary possibly with the Revolutionary name of the town, Liberty.

When the close of the war brought to an end the régime on which the prestige of "the

*The author desires to acknowledge his debt to a charming story, "The Passing of Falstaff," published some fifteen years ago.

old Planters'" depended, the mansion stood like some of those who had resorted there: a mere relic of the past, still retaining its stately mien but antiquated, out of date, and sinking to decay in silent dignity. The once snowy paint blistered and peeled from portico and portal; the fences rotted to decay, and the once carefully tended walks crumbled beneath the foot not of man, but of time and the elements.

Then came the boom as unexpected and apparently as disastrous as the boom of the guns that had startled and shocked the quiet region in the terrible year, sixty-four, when War's ploughshare ploughed a deep, broad furrow through the land.

It was then that the new railroad, so loudly heralded, came into, or nearly into, the town, and, with levitical look, passed by on the other side. Streets, long, dusty, and hot, were laid out at right angles to one another, taking in not only the suburbs, but ranging on in their checker-pattern far into the country, marking the green or brown fields with long lines of naked, upturned

earth: deep cuts, and high "fills," which in bad weather were impassable, and in all weather were hideous, like raw welts on the smooth body. "Corner lots" sold at fabulous prices to people who had never seen them, and who never paid for them. A mania seized on the people.

When the drop came, it was simply that—a drop. No one knew why it came or how. The bubble had simply burst, and the boom collapsed. No one had made money by it. Every one seemed poorer than before, and Liberty, after its one wild, boom orgy, sank back into its old, dusty, humdrum life and ways. Only the long, raw welts: cuts, and fills; a few ugly, modern brick structures—in boom parlance, "up-to-date blocks"—standing up bare and shameless and empty among the quaint, dormer-windowed frame-buildings or solid brick houses of an older and serener age, marked its fall in its unhallowed chase for wealth.

It was in the boom-time that the large, hideous shell, called the "Windsor Palace Hotel," was built on the new street, termed

"Fifth Avenue," which, like Aaron's rod, had swallowed the serpentine up-country road. This hotel was the chief toadstool of the mushroom city, and here, mainly in its large bar-room, during its brief deceptive career, the glib real-estate agent plied his alluring and mendacious practices, and the self-assertive drummer, cigar or toothpick in mouth, aired himself and his views with the confidence which had brought him to his present eminence and was looked to with assurance to take him higher.

When the boom had passed, the Windsor Palace Hotel had passed also, though it lingered on cataleptically for a year or two, while only drummers stamped through its vacant and resounding halls and shrunken bar, discussing its future end with a shrewd question or two as to "Old Dick's present insurance," until it went up one night in smoke, leading the astute young men who "travelled" in that "territory" to nod sagaciously, for the most part with an eye closed, and curse the fate that would throw them back to the old Planters'.

II

It was a topic of conversation among a group of the travelling brotherhood one autumn evening within my hearing in the smoking-car of the little, ill-lighted, ill-smelling train for Liberty, that jerked and jolted over the winding and uneven road which owed its crooked being to the exploded boom of some few years back. There were half a dozen of them—all but one, the eldest, from the North—be-capped and cigaretted and self-assertive, representing as many different cities and "lines of goods," and they had taken easy possession of the car with the air of men who owned the train, as in some sort they did.

The unanimous judgment of those who had been so unfortunate as to have to stop at "that joint"—for one man was making his first trip South—was that it was "rotten," a view in which I was much interested, for I was bound for Liberty myself.

"But, you know, the place has changed hands since last season. Old Doodle's

pulled out and gone," said the eldest of the group, a pleasant-looking man of middle age whom the next oldest called Marion, and the others addressed simply as "Old man."

"Well, that's a blessing," observed another, with a young face, but an old air, as of a man who has seen the world and found it wanting. "Bound to be better; could not be worse. Only place I ever put up at where they had slop-water regular for soup—regular, mind you. I have seen it off and on at Tim Tipple's roost on the P. D. & Q., and at Slive Hunker's—where I first met you, Jake,—you remember?—and at several other places; but never regular except at the Planters'. I wonder who old Doodle's unloaded on, and what he got?"

"Don't know, Mack; but he stuck whoever 'twas, no matter what he got."

"That's easy. Ever try to sell him a bill of goods or stand him off?" The laugh that went up testified to old Doodle's character.

"I can stand axle-grease for cheese, for a variety," said one, whom the others called

"Henchy"—short, as I learned, for Henchman—"but I do think the box ought to be hid."

"Maybe, old Doodle's dead?" suggested another who had been working over a pipe: a curly-headed youth named Jake. His voice had an accent of hope.

"No such good luck. That kind don't die," said Henchy. "He's robbed some poor devil and gone off, leaving him the bag to hold."

"'Tain't a him; it's a her," observed Marion.

"A what? What kind of a her? Wid' or old maid?" "What's her name?" "Where'd she come from?" "How'd she get into it?" were questions all asked together within a minute, with many forebodings that it would be "worse than ever," unless, indeed, as some thought, that were impossible.

"Named Garnett, I think," said Marion, when the questions slackened. "Widow, I judge. They always spoke of 'Mrs. Garnett's.' Her husband was—let me see—

what did they say? Oh, yes; they said he was a colonel and had—let me see—done something in the war? What was it? Oh, I don't know; played hell somewheres—at Gettysburg or somewheres. Oh, I don't know."

"Well, I'm glad he's dead, anyway," observed Mack, amiably.

"I guess he was dead some time before they buried him," said Jake, a view that met with a prompt indorsement.

"I think I'll go on, and wire my folks to-morrow morning," continued the youth. "I'm getting too old for this sort of thing. I like a bed's 'll stand still an' not run clean away."

"I've *got* to stop," said another, despondently: a traveller for "notions." "Got a bill of goods to look after. Sold last season, by one of the firm, and the Boss sent me down specially to see what's to pay."

"Oh, well, I guess I'll stop. I'm tough."

"You're that all right, Jake," observed his friend, to the appreciation of the others.

"Why didn't old Doodle have brains to

do like old Dick up to the Windsor, and burn her and collect his insurance like a gentleman, instead of playin' off on a poor widdy woman?"

"Now, if I'd said that!" commented the one they called Jake, with an expressive gesture and shrug, at which there was a laugh.

"You wouldn't dare," said Mack.

"Oh, 'tain't so bad," suddenly observed a pleasant-looking fellow who had not spoken before, and whose name I afterward learned was Wilson. "I crossed a fellow the other night at the theatre in Florence. Said he'd been there, and they were mighty nice folks had it now. Didn't know very much about runnin' a hotel,—left it pretty much to two old niggers,—but were straight all right. Sort of high-toned, and make you feel sort of company; but he said there was an all-fired— However—nothing." He stopped short, and the next second tried to adjust his necktie by the reflection in the darkened window-pane.

Just then the conductor, a thin, gaunt man, with deep lines in his face, came in

with his dim lantern in the crook of his arm and spoke to a young man who had got on at a station a little way back and had sat ever since on the opposite side from us. He had a law-book on his knee; but for the most part he gazed straight ahead in reflection, which I judge must have been pleasant, from the smile which occasionally flitted across his face, making him suddenly almost handsome.

"That Joe Daniel 's ahead there—been foolin' with a pistol," said the conductor; "that's a mean man."

"It is mean whiskey," said the young man, quietly; "he is all right when he keeps away from liquor."

"Mean whiskey and mean nigger, too," said the conductor with conviction. He unexpectedly took from his side pocket a pistol and handed it to the young man. "Give that to old Julius, will you, and tell him to keep that nigger off my train." His jaw suddenly took a firm outline.

"I reckon you will have to do that, captain," said the young man with a laugh, as

he pocketed the pistol. "He has got away from Julius."

"Well, I want him to keep off my train, trying to make trouble," said the conductor, decisively, as he reached up for the bell-rope.

Next moment the engine whistled—the hoarse cry of the dusty brakeman, "Liberty!" set the group of drummers to gathering up valises and sample-cases, and speculating as to whether they would find a bus or a "nighthawk," or would be forced to plough through the mud.

III

The train came joltingly to a halt, and I followed the group of drummers as they picked up their traps and moved out of the door. On what should have been the platform, but was a stretch of sand uncertainly lighted by the dull gleam sifted through the car windows, a few loungers stood about in the gloom, hands in pockets, and up the track a little way beyond, where a negro

was talking drunkenly, was heard the jar of trunks as they dropped heavily from the baggage-car in the fitful light of a smoky lantern. My friends, the drummers, moved up in a group, opening in a chorus of objurgations by no means complimentary to Liberty or the railway, when a lantern appeared close beside us, and a voice insinuated itself through the dusk.

"Planters' Hotel, gem'men? On'y fust-class hotel in de city, suh."

Muttered terms of derision were exchanged between the young men as they kept on toward the baggage-car, from which the heavy thud of trunks being dropped on the ground still came, the fitful gleam of the lantern moving beside us as the bearer kept pace with us.

"All out?" inquired a voice; to which the reply came, "Yep; let her go!" and at the conductor's announcement, "All aboard!" sung out in the darkness behind us, the engine gave a screech, and, with a labored *chug-chug*, the train started.

As the band of dim light from the win-

dows moved on beyond us, grotesquely zigzagging up the banks ahead of us, and disappeared beyond, leaving only the light at the rear of the train glowering back at us like a dull, crimson eyeball, three or four negro youths appeared, offering to take our grips and asking for a dime. The voice near us once more insinuated itself: "Planters' Hotel, gem'mens? On'y fust-class hotel in de city. I'll teck yo' baggage. Jes' gimme yo' carpet-bags—yo' grips, and yo' checks."

The drummers were counting their pieces and, finding the tale correct, one of them turned and asked: "Got a bus?"

"Aw—yes, suh; yes, suh. Got a—got eve'ythin'. Jes' gimme yo' checks. I'll ten' to eve'ythin'. Needn't trouble yo'self 'bout nothin'. You jes' lef' 'em to old Julius. He'll ten' to 'em. You jes' wait fo' me a minute." A shrill explosion of laughter from one of the negro boys standing listlessly by drew from him a sharp rebuke. "What you laughin' at? Git back out o' my way or I'll mak' you laugh wrong side yo' mouf."

The checks were handed over to him, and a colloquy ensued between him and the station-agent, while the drummers discussed and inveighed against the fate that had led them to a Sunday at Liberty.

Finally the old colored man turned. "All right, gem'mens. Jes' a minute. I'll be dyah in a minute, an' I'll show you de way."

"Where's the bus?" they called after him. But with a "Yes, suh; yes, suh; close by," he disappeared in the darkness without vouchsafing further answer.

"I believe he's lying. Don't believe there is any bus," hazarded one of the young men. "Did he say there was a bus?"

"Of course he's just lying."

Just then the sound of wheels reached us, and an old rattle-trap of a wagon approached through the dusk and drew up beside the luggage.

A negro boy near by gave a shrill laugh of amusement and turned to one of his companions.

"Dat's what he call a bus."

"Now, gem'mens, gimme yo' grips."

"Here, I thought you said you had a bus! What do you mean by lying to us? Do you call that a bus?" the drummers called to him derisively.

"Well, suh, not edzackly a—bus, but a—ve-hicle," said the old fellow. And with much clatter the luggage was got into the wagon. The old man handed his lantern to a negro boy, saying, "Heah, light de gem'mens," part order, part request, and, turning with a bow to us, said: "Gem'men, you jes' foller me. Jes' foller old Julius." He mounted his wagon amid the jeers of the drummers and drove on through the sand.

After a drive and plod of a mile through the sand, during which the drummers bombarded him with their raw-edged wit all the way without a moment's peace, the driver called, "Whoa!" and the horse stopped at a gate in front of a large, double-winged, old-fashioned mansion, set back from the street, with big pillars two stories high. The old man descended from his perch.

"Jes' walk right in, gem'mens," he said

with a new air. "Yo'll fin' eve'ythin' comf'table, and de cun'l in dyah waitin' supper fo' de guests."

This last, at least, was encouraging; for the night air and the trudge through the sand had whetted our appetites. So, with many directions to him to take care of their baggage, the "guests" filed up the path, and, crossing the wide and somewhat dilapidated porch, entered the only "fust-class hotel in Liberty."

Before us was a large hall, at present empty, on one side of which, beginning about half-way back, curved up a fine old stairway of the colonial pattern, with fluted spindles. On each side were rooms, and at the back two doors opened on the rear. The furnishings were a long table, on which stood a big lamp with a smoky chimney and two or three well-thumbed volumes; half a dozen or more chairs and a long rack on the wall, flanked by a number of old prints of horses and dogs, and a well-smoked portrait of an elderly gentleman in a velvet coat and ruffles, with a dress-sword at his hip. In

one of the rooms at the side, which presented the appearance of a sort of parlor, an old man was seated in an arm-chair, reading a newspaper by a dim lamp on a round table with a heavy carved base; but if he heard us enter, he took no notice of us, and we were left in the hall to our own devices until the old darky shambled in at the back door, lugging the highly prized hand-bags.

IV

The young men stood about, inspecting the scanty and battered furniture in the apartment, the time-marked prints on the wall, and the objects visible through the open door of the adjoining room, and passing criticisms on them, mainly jocular and often acute. The old gentleman, they decided, was probably the parlor-boarder, engaged in gleaning last year's news from the weekly newspaper. Mack hazarded a wager that he was "an old Rebel general living on his memories of 'before the war', and a bottle." The bottle-clause had no taker.

Gradually the criticism extended until it included the entire region and everything in it, which they damned generously and impartially. "It's the same eternal Southern shiftlessness," said Mack, to which the others gave a hearty assent.

Suddenly I became aware of a presence: a little old lady in black had appeared among us, though where she came from, I scarcely knew, she had entered so quietly. She went around and spoke to each one, extending her hand, and giving us all a word not only of greeting, but of welcome. She was a quaint little lady, very spare and meagre-looking, with bright, kind eyes, and was dressed in a black dress, very old and much worn, with a white kerchief about her throat. Her gray hair, brushed simply over her temples, added to the old-time air which surrounded her and appeared to pervade the place as she entered. When she extended her welcome to me I observed that the hand she gave me was curiously small, and so hard that it gave me a pang. It seemed quite incongruous with her soft,

silvery hair, delicate features, and gentle air.

"Will you write your name for me?" she asked with a smile, as she turned to the old ledger on the table, adding, as though by way of apology, "I like to have my friends write their names down so that I can remember them."

In awkward silence one man after another shambled up and scribbled his name and handed the pen to his neighbor, instead of flinging it on the table as he usually did at a hotel. They were beginning to be under the spell, as I was.

"And now," she said, with a glance around at each one, "I wonder if you would not like to run up to your rooms before supper? Supper will be ready soon. It will be a little late to-night, as we had a little accident in the kitchen; but it will be ready, I hope, in a short while. How many are there of you?" She counted us: "One, two, three, four, five, six. Oh, dear! I have only four rooms ready. I wonder if any of you happen to be brothers?" she inquired.

"Yes, those two are brothers," declared Mack, pointing shamelessly at a dark little fellow with an Italian face and at the lightest-haired man in the lot. "And those two." He pointed at me and the one called Marion. All four of us protested, but if Mrs. Garnett heard, she paid no heed to us.

"Well, supper will be ready directly," she said, "so you may want to go to your rooms. And I will have your valises sent up as soon as my servant comes in—unless," she added as an afterthought, "you prefer to take them up with you, as he has to look after his horse." I set the example by grabbing my bag, and the others rather gloomily followed suit. Thus armed, we waited.

"Oh," she said, "you don't know your rooms, do you? Of course not. Well, I must show you, and you can suit yourselves. Come along." She proceeded to pilot us up the broad, bare stairway, followed by the procession of drummers, who were nudging and hinting to one another their views of the Planters' and their determination to

"get out of that" by the first train the next day. The selection of rooms rather increased this decision. The chambers were large and absolutely bare of all but the necessary furniture; but that was of rosewood and mahogany, high, testered beds and dressers, once handsome, now much battered and defaced. I must say they were clean, a rare and unlooked-for virtue. Marion and I, as brothers, took one together. A minute later the old darky bustled in, perspiring freely with his haste. "Ol' Miss" had sent him "to see if de gem'mens wanted anything." What we wanted we did not say.

V

PRESENTLY a bell sounded down-stairs, and we all descended. I was struck with the change the last quarter of an hour had made in the young men. In the interval all had brushed their hair, and nearly all had put on clean collars. The Jew's crinkly curls glistened with the water that was still on them, while the heads of most of the

others were brushed as smooth as energy and care could make them.

The lady was waiting for us down-stairs. Still we waited, and impatience began to be manifested in more faces than one. In a moment, however, the door opened, and the same old colored man we had seen appeared with a waiter under his arm.

"Is Master down?" inquired the lady.

"Yas'm; he's in dyah," said the old darky.

"Will you walk in?" she said pleasantly, when she was satisfied that we were all present or accounted for. She turned toward the door. The man who stood nearest was about to swing in at the door ahead of her, but Marion, who stood next him, seized him by the arm with a grip that made him wince, and Mrs. Garnett swept in. I caught sight of the same back I had seen in the other room. The man was seated at the foot of the table, but rose on our entrance and bowed to us.

"My husband, gentlemen," said the lady with a smile so natural that we all felt

rebuked, or, at least, lost our manner of levity.

"Glad to meet you, gentlemen," said the old fellow, with a bow so grand that I was quite unprepared for it. "Won't you take seats?" He spoke quite as if we were his guests, and the awkward way in which my fellow-travellers shuffled into their chairs testified their unwonted embarrassment. Even the Jew and Mack kept silence, and under some accession of respect forbore to wipe their plates with their napkins. If, however, the Colonel, as he was called by his neighbors, observed it, he gave no sign. He opened the conversation, at the same moment that he took up his carving-knife, and led it along easy lines, addressing himself now to the table at large, now to each person, whom he addressed as, "You, sir."

"The train was a little late," he observed. "Our roads are shamefully conducted by these new gentry who have come down"—he did not specify from where, but it was plain what region he indicated—"and are undertaking to gobble up everything." He

hoped his servant had been on time to meet us and bring up our "carpet-bags." This word he corrected a moment later, and used the term "baggage." The negroes were "so trifling these days" that one could never count on them; "utterly inefficient," he declared them; but he admitted that Julius Daniel was quite an unusual man for a negro. "He owns a little wagon and horse which he uses to bring baggage up from the station, and is quite an exceptional man." This reference he made while Julius was out of the room purveying a fresh assortment of batter-cakes, and I observed that he never referred to the "negroes" in Julius's presence. This led him to the subject of the war, and he was soon deep in the campaigns of the Army of Northern Virginia, which, by his account, were one long blaze of glorious victories, undimmed by a single reverse. In the midst of his account, one of the boys, who travelled for "yarns," asked, "Were you in the war?"

"Sir?" said the colonel, who thought he had not heard him correctly.

"Were you in the war?"

"Yes, sir," said the colonel, quietly, and turning, he addressed a man on the other side of the table, and never again looked at the questioner; nor did he again refer to the war, but spoke entirely of what had occurred "before the war," when, as he said frankly, "he lived," adding that now he "only existed."

Mrs. Garnett, at the head of the table, dispensed her tea and coffee with the graciousness of a lady to her guests, and I observed that she did not eat a mouthful. Through an open door behind her I caught a glimpse of a stout old colored woman moving about, and once I thought I saw a young girl, with a plate in her hand, peeping in at the door and smilingly beckoning to Julius.

When we were through supper, the old fellow at the foot of the table rose and, with a wave of his hand, said: "The smoking-room is across the hall, gentlemen." Then with a bow to his wife: "My dear, you will excuse us?" And we all followed him, feeling much as if we were in a play. I must

say that my respect for him rose, and so, I think, did that of the others, for he treated us as a host treats his guests, offering us pipes, of which there was a small and battered collection, and apologizing for not having any cigars, after having called Julius and inquired if there were not some.

"Well, please remind me to get some to-morrow," he said.

"Yes, suh; but to-morrer's Sunday," said the old negro.

"Sunday? So it is. Well, remind me on Monday."

"Yes, suh." Julius solemnly withdrew.

"They have no memory whatever, none whatsoever," observed the old fellow in a tone of resignation when Julius had retired.

Through an open window the hum of voices came to me, and I caught sight of the glint of a white dress passing down the walk, and thought I recognized beside it in the dusk the straight back and slouched hat of a young man I had seen on the train. Suddenly, as the latch clicked, the old colonel rose, and, with a bow like that with which

he had greeted us, said: "Well, gentlemen, I regret that I have to leave you. The infirmities of age begin to press upon me, and an old wound sometimes gives me trouble; so I have to retire rather early and get my sleep. I believe you all know your rooms, and Julius will be on hand in case you require anything. Pray ring for whatever you need. Good night." And with another bow he shuffled off.

One man after another had awkwardly risen from his seat under some unwonted, but compelling impulse to do what they possibly had not done in all the years of their travelling. As the door closed, the little Jew turned, and, with a shrug and spread of his hands outward, said: "Vell, he's a new von on me. I haf seen 'em all, but he's new goods. What you make of him? You haf lived before the war." He addressed himself to Marion. The traveller for yarns answered for him.

"He has gone to lay up to his bottle."

This created a diversion in which the old fellow's reputation somewhat suffered, as,

one after another, the drummers, released from the unaccountable influence of his presence, sank back into their habitual attitude of cavilling criticism. One recalled the old man's dissatisfaction with everything since the war. Another cited his allowing his wife to attend to the business of the establishment; while several others united in criticising his views on the Negro, though the old negro whom we had seen appeared to do all the work. Thus, when we went to bed the attitude was one of hostility to the colonel and of growing criticism toward everything in the house. That the Pied Piper had not piped all the rats away, I could have testified that night.

VI

NEXT morning, although I descended to breakfast rather late, it being Sunday, I found myself among the earliest, and one by one my companions of the evening before drifted in. Mrs. Garnett was seated at the head of the table, and her greeting made

amends, at least to me, for the delay in getting breakfast. The meal did not differ in many respects from that of the evening before, the chief difference consisting in a larger assortment of hot bread, and in old Julius's clean shirt and high collar. In the glare of the daylight our hostess looked older and more worn than she had done the night before, and, notwithstanding the fact that her attire was more carefully arranged, it looked even more threadbare than it had done in the softened lamp-light. The colonel did not appear at breakfast, and old Julius did the honors, urging "anuther cake, gem'men?" or "jes a cup of coffee?" in accents as soft as velvet.

Presently, just after the last of her guests had entered and she had poured out his coffee, the hostess addressed the table at large: "Now, young gentlemen, how many of you will accompany me to church? I hope you all will. We have two pews, and have the privilege of as many more sittings as we need, and even if we are a little late——"

I never saw such undisguised astonishment as that which sat upon the faces of the entire company. They were too surprised to laugh, which I greatly feared they might do. The young Jew was equal to the emergency. "Vell, I'm a Jew," he said, looking her guilelessly in the face. "My Sabbath vas yesterday."

"I'm a Catholic," said the traveller for notions, "and I'm afraid of Father Horrigan." He winked openly at Marion, who looked away and refused to see him.

"I am sure it would not do you any harm," said the lady, mildly; "and if Father Horrigan is as good a man as I hope he is, he will understand. However, I do not wish you to go against your conscience." The snicker, audible down the table, was, I suppose, at the idea of Dalling's having a conscience; but Marion, to break the effect, announced his wish to accompany her. I followed suit, and so did the two other young men, bent, as I believe, on sheer mischief, though another possible reason for it appeared a few minutes later.

I was seated in the smoking-room with my back to the door, which was open, when I became aware that something was taking place in the hall, on which the attention of my companions was suddenly riveted. Following their glance, I saw Mrs. Garnett in the act of presenting her escorts to a young lady, who, simply attired in white, with a large, white hat round which was wrapped some soft, white stuff, seemed suddenly to transform the entire establishment. An old colored woman was at the moment on her knees behind her, arranging her skirt, her eyes on her full of adoring affection, her white teeth gleaming with gratified pride, and when the young lady turned and smiled down at her, she gave an answering nod of complete satisfaction. When I joined them, I was presented to "My daughter," and I quite understood Wilson's unfinished reference of the evening before to the "all-fired" something, and his instinctive tug at his necktie. Her face had a charm in which I thought grave responsibility had played its part, for the frank smile in her eyes was

deepened by the firmer lines about the mouth. But I own that a large, white hat shading a lovely face, lighted by beautiful eyes, quite destroys my judgment as to details. It is the proper canopy of romance.

So, leaving the others,—I thought, in a somewhat crestfallen condition,—we went to church, where we sat high up in a pew, evidently one of the best, among "the quality," and heard a perfectly sound and arid sermon. When we came out we found the rest of my fellow-travellers standing somewhat obtrusively among the throng that lined the sidewalk to see the congregation come forth, and certainly a dozen young men, obviously waiting to ask the privilege of escorting our young lady home, of whom the young fellow I had seen on the train bore off the honors. We knew that afternoon from Julius that "Mist' Calvert" was a "mighty fine gem'man."

The old colonel showed off better in church than he had done the evening before; in fact, he was a dignified figure in his threadbare black coat, his limp, but speckless

linen, frayed collar, and worn necktie. But it was not at the colonel that my young men gazed.

The dinner was late; but was good, and, as I discovered afterward, was prepared, at least in part, by the young lady who had adorned the pew at the morning service, and who now, having doffed her church apparel, turned Abigail and served the meal. I caught, through an open door, a glimpse of her with sleeves rolled up over arms round enough to have served as models to restore those the Venus of Melos had lost, an apron up to her white throat, and a stout old negro woman helping her to dress a cake. That afternoon we all knew that she taught in the Sunday-school, and later we knew from Mack that she had gone to walk with that "same young fellow," as Mack termed him, with something of reprobation in his tone. The effect on the young men was striking and immediate. I never knew a greater or more sudden accession of piety, and Father Horrigan, if the extreme constructionist that Dalling had declared

him, would have been scandalized by his parishioner's backsliding. Next morning not a man was late to breakfast, and when the young lady started for the school which she taught, little Mack nearly broke his neck to open the gate for her.

When we came away no one was about except old Julius, and presently one of the boys said to him: "I want to pay my bill and get off."

"I'll teck it," said the old fellow, simply. So we paid him, and left our good-bys for our hostess.

VII

I DID not visit Liberty again for two years; but when I had occasion to return there, on the same jolty little train I found little Mack and almost the same set of drummers. As the young men fell into conversation I fancied I saw some change in them. What was it? They had undoubtedly refined. They were less loud and a trifle less vulgar. They were all headed for Liberty to spend Sunday, which in itself surprised me, and I

began to ask questions about our friends of the Planters'.

"Oh, the Planters' was about the same; but that was all right, and—yes, 'ol' mistis' was all right and the 'colonel,' too, just the same—let his wife and daughter do all the work while he 'held his job down,' telling 'how trifling the niggers are' and hitting the bottle." This view of the colonel was warmly contested by Mack.

"I know the sort. It's the Southern of it," put in unexpectedly a new man who had been sitting on the other side of the car. Mack turned on him with a cold gleam in his eye. "Travelled in the South much?"

"No; and don't want to, either."

"What do you travel for?"

"Brass goods."

"Thought so," said Mack, shortly, and, turning his back on him, lowered his tone.

"Did you ever hear what Plane, of Plane & Snapper, said about him?" he asked us. "He said that he'd tried to help him; but he just couldn't be helped—couldn't do a thing in the world. But that was all straight

goods those fellows gave us about him in the war—chargin' the battery, and about his being shot through, and asking the fellow to please lend him his arm; but he said he was 'all in' years ago—said he was just 'inefficient.'"

Presently I discovered that nearly every one of them was bringing some contribution to the larder, or some present to his friends. One had something vaguely characterized as "canned goods," which he was taking down "from his mother," though he casually mentioned that his mother had died when he was six years old, and he'd "like to know what his old man's 'second order' would think of it if she were asked to contribute anything to anybody on earth. She had never let the old man give him a cent since he was twelve." Yet another had a box of cigars for the colonel, which he brazenly declared he would give him as Havanas, though they were made by Wrap & Co., of Norwalk, Connecticut. "He'll never know the difference; wait and see." Another had a turkey which his sisters were

sending down as a token of their appreciation of Mrs. Garnett's trying to get him to go to church. "What did I say their names were, Skin?" he asked his friend in the next seat. "I know I tried to give 'em 'quality names,' as old Jule says."

"That comes of trying to get a gloss on," commented his friend.

So it went. Nearly every one had picked out something to eke out the fare these young knights of the sample-case thought too scanty for their needs, yet were willing to put up with for some undefined compensation. I wondered what it could be. I wondered how much of their surprising new interest in the Planters' was due to the youngest member of the colony; but I got no inkling of this.

We landed at Liberty about the same hour and in much the same way that we had landed there before. Old Julius was on hand, but this time the greeting was wholly different. The young men were now plainly on intimate terms with the old negro.

"Hello, Uncle Jule!" "Hello, old man; how's everybody?" they called.

"G'd even', gem'mens. All's well, thanky, suh. Who's dat? Why, hi! Ef dat ain't Mister Marion! Dat you, Mister Mack? How's you all, gem'mens? Umhum! Got a big bus full to-night."

"You've got a bus, have you? New one, I suppose? Four horses, rubber tires? Well, fetch it around." So they pelted him with questions as he busied himself among their bags, his face lighted up by the fitful gleam of the smoky lantern. But now the tone was friendly. And the answer was a laugh. "Bus 'nough to git de ol' man a extry quarter or two."

"How's everybody? Ol' miss?"

"All fust-rate, gem'mens. Dey'll cert'n'y be glad to see you. De cun'l was sayin' las' week 'twas 'bout time for you all to be along."

"Is that so?" The speech had been addressed to the group, and the reply was general and appreciative.

"Yes, suh, dat he was. He was talkin' 'bout you jes yistidy, Mr. Marion."

"He was?" The old traveller was manifestly pleased.

"Yes, suh. He axed me ef I thought de bar'l o' flour 'd hold out. 'T you ought to be along 'most any time, now."

"He's gauged you, all right, old man," clamored the others. The negro was taken rather aback by the application of his master's speech.

"No, suh, gem'mens. De cun'l he didn't mean nothin' like dat. He likes a gem'man to be a hearty feeder. Dat's what mecks him lak you gem'mens. He say he never see such a hearty feeder in his life."

Perhaps it was to create a diversion that the hearty feeder asked: "How are the rats?"

"De rats? De ain't a rat on de place."

"There ain't? What's become of 'em? Eaten 'em?"

"No, suh, not a rat," persisted the old man. "De cun'l tol' me not long ago to git rid of 'em, if I had to bu'n de house down."

"That's the only way to get rid of them rats," interpolated Marion.

"'Cause he said," pursued the old negro, "he was p'intedly afeared Mr. Marion

wouldn't come back no mo'. He said he never see a man so skeered o' rats in his life. Dat *he* warn't as much afeared o' Yankees endurin' de war as Mr. Marion was o' rats."

"They weren't as dangerous," said Marion, amid laughter.

Just as we were about to start, some one asked in a querulous voice if we could tell him what the best hotel was, and how he could get there. It was the man who had been snubbed on the train by little Mack. No one had taken any notice of him, and now he was in a very bad humor.

"Uncle Jule," called Mack, without looking at him, "here's some one wants to know what's the best hotel in Liberty. Can you tell him?"

The old darky descended solemnly from his wagon, on which he had perched himself, and, hat in hand, bowed to the stranger. "Oh, yes, suh. De Planters' 's de on'y fust-class hotel in Liberty. Jes gimme yo' checks, suh."

"How far is it?" demanded the stranger.

"'Tain't so fur. Jes a little ways. You gimme yo' carpet-bag. You jes follow dese gem'mens. Dee's all goin' dyah. You can't git 'em to go nowhere else. You ax 'em."

"What sort of a hotel is it?" asked the new-comer.

"Good enough for us," answered one of the young men, shortly.

"Where's the bus?"

"Uncle Jule, show him the bus."

"Well, ur—de bus ain' heah dis evenin'," said the old man diplomatically. "But you jes foller dese gem'mens; dey loves to walk."

"Well, I don't, I want a conveyance."

"No, you want the world with a new painted fence around it," snapped one of the drummers. The stranger was evidently angered.

"It's this confounded Southern shiftlessness," he snarled.

"Yes, that's it—you know all about it," assented a familiar voice out of the group. "Where are you from?" It was little Mack.

"From north of Mason and Dixon's Line, thank God!"

"You are thankful for small favors," sneered Mack, who was himself from Hartford, Connecticut. "What'd they run you out for?"

"Run me out? I wasn't run out. What do you mean?"

"Oh, I thought you wouldn't have come down to a country you think so ill of, if you could 'a' stayed anywhere else."

"I'm travelling down this way for my health," growled the other.

"Well, I can tell you one thing," said the little drummer, "your health will not be improved by expressing views like that around the Planters'."

The walk up through the sand was as before; but only Tompkins, the stranger, swore at it. The others, whether amused at his unhappiness or accustomed to it, were good-humored and lively.

The greeting we received was enough to have put even an older lot of wayfarers in good humor. If we had been cousins, that

generic name by which are known all who have even a drop of common blood, we could not have received a warmer welcome from the mistress; and even the colonel, though he had manifestly failed since I saw him last, was most cordial, and as soon as the names of the young men had been recalled to him, asked particularly about their families.

At the table I observed that Jake and little Mack had laid aside their flaming neck-gear and travelling-men's hotel manners, and whatever came in at the door behind Mrs. Garnett's right shoulder was "delicious." When Miss Garnett came in with a plate of cakes, every man was on his feet instantly.

It was astonishing what early risers they became, how often their way lay in the direction of Miss Garnett's school, though it was on the outskirts of the town, and how regular they grew to be at early Sunday tea. As far as I could learn, no one of them except possibly Mack ever ventured to speak a word of gallantry to her,

though I heard of Jake's once saying to Marion, "I *vish* her name vas Rachel." An indefinable something seemed to wall her around and shield her. Little Mack overwhelmed her with plush-covered boxes of every hue and shape, which bespoke his sentiment as different flowers conveyed that of older, but not more ardent suitors. It was evident, indeed, that several of the "guests" had fallen under her spell. I knew of their guilefully misleading her on the street when the colonel would be making his way slowly homeward after having lingered too long with some old comrade to discuss a battle or an extra julep, though he was never really intoxicated; and little Mack first snubbed, then openly insulted, the dyspeptic and ill-bred youth who, as stated, was out on his first trip through the South. When the latter came to the table the evening following our arrival, it was soon apparent that he had a grievance against the entire region, and proposed to air it. He called for things that only a first-class hotel could furnish, and with

every bow and apology from old Julius that they were "jes out," and every expression of regret from "ol' miss" that they did not have that, he gave a sniff, until little Mack, with a snap in his eyes, chipped in to the rescue with the point-blank suggestion that he must have been a cook. The new arrival flared up, but Mack had the gallery, and when Tompkins began to boast about his house selling everything in brass, Mack asked innocently, "Brass monkeys?"

"Yes, brass monkeys, too, if you want them."

"No," said Mack. "I don't like the sample."

As Tompkins left the table he said audibly: "This is the rottenest hotel I ever struck." If Mrs. Garnett heard, she did not show it; she only looked down in her plate. Little Mack strolled out, and half an hour later, with a cut lip and a black eye, he handed Mrs. Garnett a letter with an apology from Tompkins for having been rude to her. Tompkins took his breakfast in his room the next morning, and when I saw

him on his way to the train that evening, the manner in which Mack had extorted the apology was rubricated over his face. I was not surprised to observe later that old Julius always began the hot cakes at Mack's seat, or that the colonel offered him first his cigars, which he said his friend Jake had done him the honor to bring him, adding, "I am assured they are the finest Havanas."

But Tompkins's troubles were not over. His bag had been cut by rats, and he had refused to settle his small board-bill, having no doubt a feeling of having been badly used, and taking this method of settling the damage done to his property. I was leaving by the same train, which, as happened, was considerably late, and thus was present in the waiting-room when Nemesis, in the person of old Charlotte, the wife of Julius, panting and perspiring from her rapid walk through the sand, strode in at the door. A man's slouch hat was on her head, and she had on her kitchen apron. A glance of the eye picked the delinquent out from the

other half-dozen passengers waiting, and she walked up to him.

"You's Mr. Tompkins?"

"Who says so?" asked Tompkins surlily.

"I says so—I knows you. I don' wonder you's 'shamed to own it."

"What do you want?"

"My mistis's money, what you owes her."

"I don't. Who says I owe her? Who is your mistis?"

"I does; I says you owes her, and you knows you does. Mr. Mack done had to whip you once 'bout bein' impident to her, and I don't want to have to git after you." She glared at him with so instant a gaze that the young man quailed. He put his hand in his pocket.

"I paid all I owe, and more, too."

"You didn't."

"I did. I paid all but enough to pay for the rats cutting my bag."

"Rats! Never was a rat in dat house. Gimme my mistis's money."

"How much is it?" he growled.

"You knows how much 't is, and I knows: gif 't to me."

Tompkins counted out a small sum reluctantly. "I was going to send it back," he growled—which, I think, indeed, was possibly the truth; but it did not satisfy the old woman.

"'Was gwine' ain' doin' it," she snapped implacably.

"I want a receipt for it," growled Tompkins.

"You want dat you ain' gwine git," she said.

She turned and bowed impressively to the rest of us. "Good even', gem'mens; I ain' gwine see my old miss' money stoled by no po' white trash." And she marched out of the door.

VIII

"FUNNY old place, ain't it?" queried one of the young men, who, like myself, turned up to spend Sunday at the Old Planters' a week later. "Now, that old fellow ought to have a gold mine right here; and if

he had it, he wouldn't open it." To some extent this was true. After making allowances for the colonel, his best friend must have admitted that he was now about as "inefficient," to use his neighbor's word, as a man could be. Adverse fortune and conditions had done their work, and possibly "laying up to the bottle," as Jake characterized it, had done its part, though he never appeared under the influence of liquor. He was simply a derelict, too battered and broken by the storm that had swept over him to make any headway or answer to any rudder, and he now lay awash in the trough of the sea, waiting for the final wave to drive him beneath the surface. His face had grown perceptibly more pallid and vacant, his air more absent, his step more uncertain, and but for the motive power furnished by his wife and daughter, he would doubtless have come to a standstill and ceased to be. It was only on rare occasions that his mental machinery now gave signs of motion. In the presence of a lady anywhere, or of a guest in his own house, the

gentleman in him still flashed out after the man had almost faded into vacuity. His wife's manner to him was wonderful. It was maternal. She treated him as an indulgent mother treats a feeble child, and yet paid him a respect that was beautiful. I had not quite defined it until my attention was called to it by the Jew.

"That's the vay ve do it," he said briefly, in an undertone, with a nod of his curly head over toward the chair when Mrs. Garnett was leaning over her husband, arranging his breakfast. "But ve do not sit down, sit down, sit down, and read papers all the time because ve are old. Because it is our law. That's the reason ve get along—always."

As harsh as it was, we had all about agreed with the characterization of the old fellow as "a dead one," and even Mack's defence of him had not done more than mitigate the contempt of youth in its arrogant energy for one who had so completely passed.

"He's dead, and don't know it," said Jake with light disdain.

She treated him as an indulgent mother treats a feeble child

But he was not quite dead.

We had left the table one evening and assembled in the hall, leaving the old man dozing in his chair without the energy to leave it. Just then there was a stir outside. Some one hurried by through the quiet evening, then another, then the sound of voices speaking hurriedly, then men ran by. Something unusual was taking place. We felt it. A change had occurred. A youth hastily entered.

"Don't you fellows want to go downtown? There's the devil to pay. They say a nigger has shot a man, and they are going to string him up."

"A lynching? Come on! Let's see what's up!" And there was a scurrying for hats and a rush down the walk. In two minutes we were on the outskirts of a crowd, already dense and rapidly growing, in a narrow side-street in the lower part of the town. Pushing in, we found the crowd at a standstill, peering down a dark alley, at the end of which was a small house in which the fugitive was said to have taken refuge. He was

said to be a desperado and was armed with a pistol, and some said with a Winchester rifle. He had shot a man in a drunken rage, and when an attempt was made to arrest him, had shot and wounded the constable, and now he had barricaded himself in this house, swearing to kill any one who attempted to take him. The constable, a stout, roundfaced fellow, with one arm in a sling and a large pistol in his other hand, was calling for a posse to help secure the desperado; but while many were eager to assist him, none was willing to lead in an assault down that narrow alley. To do so, they all agreed, would be simply foolhardy. It was a sheer death-trap. All sorts of plans were being suggested to get at him. They might set the fence along the alley on fire and burn the desperado out, or they might fire the adjoining shanty. The mere suggestion seemed to have lighted the brands, so quickly did men appear with flaming torches. The sight set the crowd wild. They suddenly changed to a mob, and clamored for fire. Just then there was a

stir which ran counter to the mob's fury: the colonel made his way quietly to the front of the crowd, and I heard him asking the name of the criminal. Some one gave it—Joe Daniel.

"Joe Daniel! What Joe Daniel? Not old Julius's son?"

"Yes, sir, he's the one."

"What has he done?"

"Killed a man."

"Killed a man! Whom? How did he come to do it?"

The story was gone over with additional details of horror. The old gentleman made a clucking sound with his tongue, expressive of sorrow. "Tcht! tcht! tcht!" He caught sight of the constable, and approached him with the same question. The constable explained briefly. He had not killed any one—had only shot at a man, wounding him, and when he went to arrest him, he had shot him, and then had run into this house and sworn to kill any one who tried to take him. "And I'm going to get him, if I die for it," added the officer. "I'm

going to show him no damned nigger can run this town."

"Of course not," said the colonel, mildly, and again he made the clucking sound with his tongue.

"I'm just plannin' now to get him out. I don't want him to kill nobody."

"I will get him," said the colonel. "You wait here." As he turned toward the alley the officer caught him.

"You mustn't go down there, colonel. He'll kill you, sure."

"Oh, no, he won't. He knows better than to try any insolence on me."

"But, colonel, you really mustn't. You—if you go, I'll go, too." But the old man had gone. Straight down the alley in the dusk he marched. The next instant a blaze flashed from a window, a loud report came, and a bullet crashed through the wall of a house hard by, which made the crowd scatter and seek shelter behind the corners. We heard the colonel shout. Another shot followed, and another in fierce succession; but a moment later we heard the old fellow banging

on the door—*rap-rap-rap*—with his cane, and caught his voice in a tone of command: "Open the door instantly." This was followed by a colloquy the tenor of which we could not hear.

The act had struck the crowd with amazement, and the colonel was for the moment the master of the mob. They discussed him freely, and debated the chance of his bringing the negro out.

"He's a wonder, anyhow, that old man."

"Who'd 'a' thought he'd still have the grit to do that!"

"Grit! Did you ever hear about the time at Malvern Hill he went right up to the gun and caught the rammer?"

"I heard about him at Gettysburg, when he got shot through, and told some one to give him his arm to help him over the fence, so he could go up and take the hill."

"If they hadn't shot him, he'd 'a' taken it too."

But the next minute the door opened, and we heard the old man's voice berating some one. A few minutes later two dark

objects appeared at the end of the alley, and, as they drew near, the colonel's voice once more was heard, "Mr. Constable, disperse that crowd, and come forward and receive your prisoner." I scarcely knew the voice, it had changed so. It had in it an unexpected ring. As the officer advanced, there was a sort of roar from the crowd, and they made a sudden rush, which swept over him. It came, however, to an even more sudden stop. There was the gleam of something in the hand of the figure in the alley, as the torchlight flashed on it, and a warning, sharp and high-pitched: "Stand back, every one of you! I'll shoot the first man that comes forward. I have given the prisoner my word that he shall be protected and receive a fair trial, and he shall have it."

The crowd stopped, and the voice could be distinctly heard. "Come on, Joe! Stand back, there, all of you!"

I never quite knew why it was, but that mob fell back and opened out; and, looking neither to right nor left, the old man walked on through it, with the negro, sobered now

through fear, pressing close behind his shoulder, the officer walking at his side. Possibly one explanation was contained in a short phrase I caught from a bystander, answering a friend: "You know, if he said he'd do it, he would." However this was, Joe was locked in the jail that night, and the colonel came home with a more erect mien than I had ever seen him wear, and had a long colloquy with old Julius, who looked the picture of woe.

Next morning he was much as he had ever been, dull and indifferent, garrulous about events before the war, querulous about the negroes, whom he declared to have been utterly ruined by freedom. For Joe, the prisoner, he appeared to have only a feeling of mild contempt. "A very good boy, sir. He would have been one of my negroes"— Joe had been born several years after the war — "Utterly ruined. All he needed, sir, was a master. A good whipping would have spared him the penitentiary, and the State all the expense of his trial. Freedom, sir, has still many crimes perpetrated in its name."

I never saw old Julius so attentive to the old fellow. Always respectful, he now hung about him all the time in a sort of dumb dependence.

Joe was duly sent to the penitentiary for a considerable term, and the only persons who thought the sentence excessive were the family at the Planters' and possibly the clear-eyed young lawyer who defended him, whose opinion might have been taken with some allowance, as he was in regular conference every evening with the young lady whom Joe's father always referred to as "My young mistis," and Joe's mother always spoke of as "My chile."

The trial came off at the fall term of the court, the colonel sitting in a chair close behind the prisoner all through the trial, and talking about him at home in the evening quite as if he were one of the family, the burden of his lament being the negroes' need of a master. And soon afterward came off an event which blessed one lover's heart, even if it desolated many more. Calvert, the young lawyer, whose efforts in be-

half of old Julius's son had proved so futile, was more successful in his pleading in a tenderer court. None of us were in Liberty, but little Mack sent a large writing-desk finished in old-gold plush as his final tribute.

IX

WHEN I returned to Liberty that autumn, I found the Planters' for some reason duller than I had ever remembered it; and this was, as I learned, the general feeling of the set of drummers whom I had met on my first visit. Both Marion and Mack declared that they should seek new routes. "Business was growing dull. Too much competition was ruining the country."

"Especially in young lawyers," interjected Jake, to which the others vouchsafed no reply. It came to me quite clearly that little Jake had hit the mark. The table was much worse than ever, the colonel much dimmer. Only "ol' miss" and Julius were the same.

At the table one morning, Henchman, who had just arrived, mentioned to Mack that he had run across his friend Tompkins a little farther south, making his way slowly northward.

"How is he getting on?" asked "ol' miss," catching the name.

"Still complaining," said Henchman. "He had been sick and had a bad season."

"Too much competition?" interjected Jake.

Remembering Tompkins, I was prepared to hear the subject dropped. But Mrs. Garnett went on: "Oh, poor fellow! We must get him here and take care of him. Do you know his address?" Henchman gave the name of a town a little farther south, and the hotel at which he got his mail.

Next evening Tompkins turned up, pale and haggard. He had received a telegram inviting him to come and rest. He was manifestly an ill man, suffering from a raging headache and fever. Next morning he had broken out, and was so ill that a doctor

was called in. In ten minutes the whole house was astir. A whispered consultation took place between the doctor and Mrs. Garnett, and then Mrs. Garnett notified the young men that they had better leave—possibly it might be small-pox. No second suggestion was necessary. Within fifteen minutes every room in the house was empty except those occupied by the family and the large chamber in which Tompkins had been put.

Small-pox it was.

As we were leaving, some one of us said to Mrs. Garnett, "You will put him in the hospital, of course?"

"No. There is no hospital in Liberty; but if there were, we could not turn the poor boy out. We must do the best we can with him here." The old colonel, who, ever since the announcement came, had been following his wife about with mingled apprehension and wonder on his vague face, asked what she had said. She repeated it.

"Hospital! Of course not! Who ever heard of turning a sick man out of the house!

I shall nurse this fellow here, and hope not to get it."

"Turn him out! Nor, suh, dat we ain't! We don' turn nobody out o' our house, sick or well," said a voice, as old Julius lined up behind him.

When we were safe in the car, with every window open, Mack said: "Lord! Lord! Were there ever such impracticable folks on earth!" There was a long pause, and then the traveller for yarns burst out: "I take back every darned word I ever said against 'em! I want you fellows to remember that, and I've said many a one. They may have what they please on their table, or nothin' at all, if they choose; I know they'd give it to us if they had it, and I can go elsewhere and get something to eat: but I won't get *that* anywhere else." He gave a jerk of his head toward the rear of the train. "And when I get sick, that's where I want to go."

Then a strange thing happened. The stingiest man in the lot, the one whose name was used as a by-word by his friends, spoke up. "Fellows, we've got to do something

for 'em. We've got to keep 'em goin'. I'm good for ten. What do you fellows say?"

"Well, Waxy can't beat me," said one after the other, and soon the crowd was making up a snug little sum to send back —"to help Tompkins."

X

I DID not get back to Liberty for some years after this; but falling in on a train with little Mack one day, I asked after our friends there.

"All gone," he said briefly.

"The old colonel? Dead?"

He nodded his head. "Him and old Julius both—that Tompkins!" he added briefly. "You remember the time he arrested that drunken nigger who had stood off the town?"

"I remember."

"Gee! That was a nervy thing. I wouldn't have gone down that alley that night to be a partner in my firm, and that old fellow went down by himself and made that nigger come out. You remember?"

"I remember."

The drummer paused in reflection. "How did he do it?"

"Courage."

"Yes, of course. But there were plenty of others there who had courage, too; but he made him do it. Seems like he knew how to do it. Didn't calculate. Just did it—out of—out of—just damned so. I never used to believe all those things he used to tell about what they did during the war. Used to think he was just lyin'. You remember how we used to sit around and josh him?"

"I remember."

The drummer gave a nod of conviction. "Well, he done 'em. You bet if he ever said he done 'em, he done 'em. One thing he didn't do was to lie." He turned and looked out of the window. I agreed to this heartily; but my companion was not thinking of me. He was back at the old Planters'.

"Lord! If that old man had been trained in Wall Street, what wouldn't he have been! Why, he'd have had a cinch. His nerve!

Shot through twict, and goes down there in the dark with a drunken nigger pumpin' lead at him, and made him give up his gun when he didn't have energy enough hardly to pick up his newspaper when it fell off his lap on the floor!"

"And 'Ol' miss'?—the Planters'? Who owns it now?"

"Burned down. No insurance, of course," he said complainingly. "And you ought to see what they've got there now for a hotel! Worse than the Planters' at its worst, and no 'Ol' miss' to make it go down. Some of us fellows—and Tompkins—talked about settin' her up—stakin' her; but she said no, she was too old, and she was all broke' up. She went to her daughter. 'Twas just as well we didn't try."

"Where is she now?" I inquired.

"Dead—All gone!"

He turned and looked out of the window, and presently took up a paper as if to read. But I observed that he was not reading.

THE STABLE OF THE INN

It was in the twenty-seventh year of the reign of Augustus Cæsar or, as some say, in quite another year—in what was known simply as the tenth month, or, by another account, at the beginning of the eighth month.

Toward the even-tide of a calm day, two travellers of the peasant class, a man and a young woman—the latter riding an ass, beside which the man walked—toiled slowly up the rough highway that climbed the rocky hills a little to the southward of the ancient capital of Judæa where Herod now reigned. The top of the pass in the range toward which their faces were set was crowned with a small town, whose walls, lifted above the straggling olive trees, gleamed white and pink in the light of the declining sun. The wayfarers had journeyed all day, and the woman was faint with fatigue. At length she spoke to the

man. He bowed his head and, as they reached a convenient point, turned out of the rough and dusty highway, and at a little distance came to a halt in a sloping, bare field to one side, in which, on an outjut of rock, stood an old and rude tower, lifted above the folds along a ledge of the hill—the tower of Eder. On the lower hills beyond the far edge of the field some shepherds were minding their flocks as they grazed their way slowly homeward along the sides of the rocky ravines which seamed the range.

Moving far enough into the field to be beyond the dust and noise of the highway, and, if necessary, to seek refuge in the tower, the man helped the woman to dismount with more gentleness than was usually shown by people of their class. Behind them streamed the mingled traffic of a road that led to a great city. Men on foot or mounted on asses or camels passed along; truckers with loads of produce packed in immense panniers on their beasts or bearing on their heads bundles so huge

that it was a wonder they were not crushed beneath them; drovers with herds of dusty cattle or flocks of sheep and goats on the way to market; travellers of a better degree, with servants and attendants following their horses or chariots; long lines of camels swinging slowly by in single file like great flocks of gigantic four-legged birds, the dust spurting in clouds at every step from their lagging feet. And now and then a body of soldiers swung clanking by, taking the best part of the road and with imperious voices ordering every one out of their way.

The man in the field was already past middle age and, though of the peasant class, his face was strong and his features good, like so many of his race. The woman, young enough to be his daughter, might have been taken for his wife, save for a certain distance in his manner toward her. A young Roman noble who passed them that day, on his way to Herod's court, observing them, and noting, with an eye for beauty, the delicate features of the young woman, disclosed by her veil's slipping for a moment, concluded

Behind them streamed the mingled traffic of a road that led to a great city

that the woman was some Jewish girl of station, and that her attendant was her father's steward escorting her home. She was, indeed, treated by her companion with a distinction approaching reverence. Having helped her down, he spoke softly and spread his robe on the ground for her to sit upon.

From a little distance floated upward the bleating of sheep, and presently the flocks began to appear, winding up from the lower slopes, led by their shepherds toward the folds built on the sides of the rocky hills. To the woman's sigh of fatigue the man replied soothingly that they would soon be at their journey's end—at Bethlehem.

"Little Bethlehem!" murmured the young woman.

"'And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda,'" quoted the man. "'For out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel.' But thou art faint. The bottle is dry. The child that cried to us for water took the last drop. I will try

to get thee some. The shepherds yonder will have it." She hinted something of her fear for him if he went among strange men; for the road from Jericho, which they had lately crossed, was infested with robbers—and the shepherds were a wild and reckless class. He reassured her and left her. Bearing the leathern bottle in his hand, he crossed the field and went over to one of the sheepfolds near by, where he talked to one of the shepherds, an elderly man, bearded to the eyes. When he returned a little later, he bore in his hand a bottle of milk and a piece of the coarse bread that the shepherds eat. Not long afterward the shepherds themselves came over, one after one; plain; bearded; beaten by the weather; tanned by the sun; men of the field, with their stout staves, their sheep-skin coats and goat-skin leggings, and their bags, or scrips, hung over their shoulders. At their approach the young woman, who was soon to be a mother, shyly drew about her her veil, which was ample enough to cover her from head to foot. The man as quietly

moved forward and, interposing between her and the strangers, greeted the leader. But they were friendly. They wanted to talk.

"Thou art from Galilee?" queried the shepherd in the lead, a rough, grizzled man with eyes that burned deep under his shaggy brows. "Thy speech is Galilean?"

The other man bowed.

"Of Nazareth."

"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth!" jeered a voice from the rear.

"As good as from Kerioth," answered another, at which his companions laughed. The speaker turned to the traveller.

"Thy name is—what?"

"Joseph, son of Jacob."

"Thou knowest my uncle, Zebedee, the fisherman? He hath a fine son——"

"I know him and his son James, and young Simon of the Rock who fishes with him."

"I know him not," said the shepherd; "but Zebedee is my mother's brother, and Judas the Zealot——"

"His wife is half-sister to her," said the

traveller, with a movement of the head toward the young woman.

The connection made an impression on all around and the men drew closer together.

"Dost thou know Judas the Zealot?" Joseph bowed.

"Hast thou seen him lately?"

"But the other day he came up from the sea to my shop to get a sheath put to his fish-knife."

"I know that knife," said the shepherd, glancing around at his companions with pride. "He had it of one of the Sicarians. The Romans did not get it."

The other shepherds laughed hoarsely.

"It hath done other work in its time," continued the shepherd. "I heard my uncle tell of it. When Judas's father was slain, one of his captains flung himself over the cliff, and my uncle found the sword later at the foot of the cliff when he was drying his net."

"When didst thou see him last?" asked Joseph, as if to change the subject.

"He came to the Passover and sought me

out. He wanted me to go and be a fisherman, but I told him that I knew the hills better than the water and I would stay here. Dost thou look for the coming one?"

Joseph bowed.

"Whither goest thou?" asked the shepherd. "Jerusalem is behind thee."

"To Bethlehem, to meet the tax, and be enrolled."

"Ah! The tax! The tax! It is always the tax," exclaimed the shepherd, while the others growled their assent. "Why should they enroll us! To slay us? Did not King David try it! And how many men did it cost! Would that we had more like Judas! Art thou of Bethlehem?" he added.

"Yea, of the tribe and lineage of David. Both of us." He glanced around to where the young woman sat.

The speech evidently made a further impression on the shepherds.

"Would that we had another David! That would be better yet!"

"Aye, aye!" echoed the others. "And he was a shepherd! He would see us

righted and not let them carry us off to the war and leave our sheep without a shepherd."

"But there is no war, now, nor rumor of war," said Joseph, "and the ploughshare is better than the sword and the pruning-hook than the spear."

"Dost thou know Joachim?" asked the shepherd suddenly.

"Yea," said Joseph; "well."

"He was once a shepherd here, fifteen or twenty years ago."

Joseph listened with interest.

"It was when the high-priest drove him from the altar because his wife was barren. He came here and lived with me. And 'tis said his wife knew not where he was and feared him dead. And he prayed always, always, and one night a vision came to him. An angel said to him: 'Was not Sara long barren? And Rachel? And yet she bore Joseph who was lord of Egypt—stronger than Samson and holier than Samuel.' And he bade him leave and go to Jerusalem and enter by the Golden Gate. And I have

heard that his wife met him there and that she bore him a daughter?"

"It is true," said Joseph; "she is there."

The shepherd stopped and gazed long and curiously at the figure on the ground.

"So!" he murmured. "Zebedee said there was talk of strange things at Nazareth; he said that word had come that again a barren woman had borne a child—a woman as old as our mother Sara, and that her husband had seen a vision—his name was Zachariah, was it not? Hast thou heard of it?" His voice sank and his eyes sought the traveller's eyes. The other shepherds listened intently.

The young woman on the ground drew her veil yet closer about her. It was as if a white morning-glory had withdrawn within itself at the approach of evening.

"I have heard so," said Joseph briefly.

"Can it be that the time draws nigh?" asked the old shepherd tremblingly.

"Who knoweth the times and the seasons?" replied the other, as if to avoid the gaze fixed upon him.

"But it is said that a virgin must bear a child, and he shall be called Emmanuel. Can it be? Does it mean that we are never to see the rising again of Israel?"

"Is the Lord's arm shortened that it cannot save?" replied Joseph quietly. "Or is his ear dulled that he cannot hear?" He turned to where the young woman sat on the ground.

"But I grow old," said the shepherd. "I had a son once, but the Romans—" He broke off. "We have scores to settle."

"Aye, that we have," came in chorus from the others.

"Wait on the Lord," said Joseph. The young woman rose from the ground and Joseph lifted her gently to her saddle.

"Have a care of thy wife," said the shepherd. "She is young and the soldiers——"

"I have no fear," said Joseph calmly.

"They fear not God, nor regard man. To them an Israelite is a dog."

"We have no fear," said Joseph firmly.

"The place will be full. There is but one inn, and it will be crowded. They have

been passing since sunrise. Clouds of dust on the road all day. We could see it from the hills."

The others assented.

"God will provide for us," said Joseph, as, bidding the shepherd adieu, he turned the ass's head toward the road.

The shepherds stood and watched them as they moved slowly upward until they were lost in the shadows on the highway, and then turned back to their flocks. What they said, it was, perhaps, well that no soldiers were near to hear; for the older man's words had stirred them deeply, and prophecy after prophecy was recounted pointing to the overthrow of Roman power.

For nearly two hours the travellers plodded onward up the mountain. The village on its shoulder above them turned pink, then white as alabaster; and then the white faded to an icy blue; once more flushed to a saffron hue, and gradually died until by the time the travellers reached the nearest houses down the slope all was dusk, and with the darkness had come the cold.

Once they paused at a turn in the road, and rested while they gazed across the dark valley to the eastward to where some miles away gleamed many lights. "There it is," said Joseph. "There is Jerusalem. The Temple."

"I have had many happy hours there," said his companion softly. As they moved on, between them and the sky, on a hill beside the road, a cross lifted itself. "Look the other way," said Joseph quickly; but he was too late. The young woman shuddered and bowed her head low. "Some robber, perhaps, but he is dead," explained Joseph. The young woman's only answer was a moan.

When they arrived at the village itself, they found what the shepherds had said to be true. The village was quite full and the only inn there had no place for them.

When they reached the gate-way of the entrance court, travellers were being turned away, and a number of them were consulting together as to whether they should remain in the street all night or should go

back toward Jerusalem. The gates would be shut; but they might find a lodging-place in some other village.

It was dark, for the moon, though nearly full, had not yet risen above the hills, and it was too late to seek shelter elsewhere. Joseph went boldly to the gate and knocked. For some time there was no answer; but he continued to knock. Jeers broke out from the group in the street behind him; but he paid no heed. He kept on knocking. After a while the bar was drawn on the inside, and the porter partly opened the gate. When, however, he saw only a plain man with a woman mounted on an ass, he spoke shortly and told him that there was no room for them in the inn. Joseph made known his situation. His wife could go no farther and could not remain in the street all night. This did not avail. The porter spoke with contempt. "Better than you have been turned away to-night."

"Than me—Yes," said Joseph; "but not better than that I bring." He took from his scrip an official paper and added that he had come "under Cæsar's order."

"You trouble me much," growled the porter. But he admitted them, and told Joseph that he might spend the night in the stable if he could find a place there.

"In the stable!" said Joseph.

"Yes, and you'd better be glad to get that," growled the porter. "The other night we had to put up a man that a dog of a Samaritan had found on the road from Jericho, naked and half dead. He must needs bring him here and order the best room for him. A priest and a Levite were here that night, and a pretty fuss they made too—they wanted him put in the stable; but the Samaritan's money was good, so the master took him in."

Joseph said that he was glad to have the stable, and, leading the ass inside the gate, he followed the direction of the porter. He picked his way carefully across the dim and dirty court, amid the camels and asses crowded therein, and crossed over to the side to which the porter carelessly waved him, where, hollowed in the rock, were the rough caves used as stables for the inn.

Here in a stall which had, perhaps, been

kept vacant in the hope that some guest of quality might come who would pay for it, and would bring honor to the inn, Joseph placed his wife, using such means as he could to make her comfortable.

The inn itself was full of life and movement; lights flared and failed and flared again, as busy servants bustled about attending to the wants of the numerous guests who ate and drank, sang, danced, and slept as they listed.

Across the court, where the camels and other cattle ruminated or slumbered, all was dark and still—as dark and still as it must have been when darkness was upon the waters before the dawn of the first creation, when God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Far away, across the sea, on her seven hills, Rome glittered with her myriad lights, innumerable as the stars of heaven, and in his imperial palace ruled Augustus Cæsar, master of the world, whose decree had gone out that all the world should be taxed —ruled in such splendor that the greatest

men of their time proclaimed him a god—ruled with such power that a simple carpenter in a little town in a far-away province across the seas could not be overlooked and left at home; but must make a long and perilous journey with his wife to be taxed in the city of his fathers, where he was a stranger, and in which when he arrived he was unable to get room in the inn, and was fain to lodge in the inn stables among the cattle, as little considered as they.

In this journey none but the lowly shepherds in the fields had taken note of them. To them happened a strange thing that night.

It must have been about midnight. The moon had crept slowly up the sky and flooded the hills with light. The oldest of the shepherds was on watch, while the others slept. Many things revolved in his mind—the promises to Abraham and to his seed forever—the words of peace that the traveller from Nazareth had spoken, swept through his memory. He began to dream. And the first thing that struck him was the

strange behavior of the sheep in the folds. They rose from the ground and, facing toward the mountain, knelt as lambs kneel at their mothers' sides. But they were all still —as still as if carved of stone. And while he wondered, suddenly there stood near him—so suddenly that it was as if he had dropped down upon him—a presence. He had no time to question—it was a light—a glory unimaginable—brighter than the moon—more glorious than the sun—like the glory of the Lord. It awoke some of the others. It was round about them, and they were sore afraid. Then a voice sounded in their ears, and the angel said unto them: "Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord, and this shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger."

Astonished and still terrified—stunned beyond thought—the shepherds lay as they had been found—and, as they told it af-

terward, suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace to men of good-will." Then they went away upward —up into the heaven—and only the shepherds were left on the earth with their flocks.

When the shepherds recovered their courage and looked up, the sky was as usual on clear and cloudless nights, and only the moon was shining down, flooding the fields with light. They began to talk in low tones of what they had seen and heard, and to wonder what it all meant. One of the younger men who had not spoken before roused up and complained that they had awakened him. "Thou sleptest soundly, then, thou of Kerioth," they said. But Judas declared that they had disturbed a dream he had. "I dreamt of silver," he said; "a garden like one I know near Jerusalem and a great treasure there—a man on his knees and I arrested him—and gave him up, and found thirty great pieces of

silver. Oh! I felt rich—as rich as that Zaccheus men talk of—and then you waked me up; I could hang myself." His companions, however, paid little attention to him. They were too wonder-struck—and presently they began to say one to another: "Let us now go even to Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

In a few moments they were ready to start.

"If we are going," said the leader, "we might as well take with us some milk. We may come across our friends, Joseph and his wife, and they will find it hard to get anything in that crowded place." He went off, and in a little while came back with a bottle of milk.

"What is the use of that?" growled the one who had had his dream disturbed. "They will have enough. Better save and sell it, and let me give the money to the poor."

"Judas, thou art ever prating of giving, yet givest naught," said the man with the bottle of milk. "Come with us."

"I am not going," said the man of Kerioth. "I shall stay and see that no one troubles the sheep."

"See that thou trouble them not thyself," said one of his fellows, at which the others laughed.

"Come on," said the leader. And they set forth in haste, followed by the gibes of the one left behind.

Out in the dusty road they filed, one behind the other, and by the moonlight began to ascend the winding, rocky road which led up toward the hills above them. Stumbling over the rocks in the dusk with their ill-shod feet; passing the commonplace wayfarers coming or going with their asses or on foot, it was hard to believe that but now they had seen and heard Heavenly messengers—as Abraham and Jacob and Daniel had seen them.

"Well, we shall know when we get there. If the babe be there—we shall know," said the leader.

It was near day when they reached the town. They came at length to the gate of the inn. In the twilight of the dawn it

was just being opened by the sleepy and gruff porter as they arrived, and he stood in the open gate-way yawning. He heard their inquiry in dull silence.

He pondered a moment. "What is it ye want?" he asked sullenly.

"We want to know if two travellers who came here late last night found shelter?"

"Two travellers? Nearer two hundred. Look at the court-yard. So full that one cannot walk across it. And the house is packed."

"Two who came late? A man and a young woman—he was much older than she—she——"

"Oh! aye. Two came late—too late——"

"What became of them?"

"There was no place for them in the inn——"

"And you turned them away?"

"Who said I did? Am I a dog to do that?"

"What became of them?"

The porter half turned.

"Go look in there." He pointed to-

ward the stable. "I gave them shelter there for the young woman—and none too soon. There are three of them there now, I judge, from what I heard but now."

The shepherds gave an exclamation and, passing across the court-yard to the stable, paused at the opening that led into the dusky recess. A woman's voice, low and soft, yet jubilant, was heard. She was speaking in the tone of gladness of a young mother:

"My soul doth magnify the Lord. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

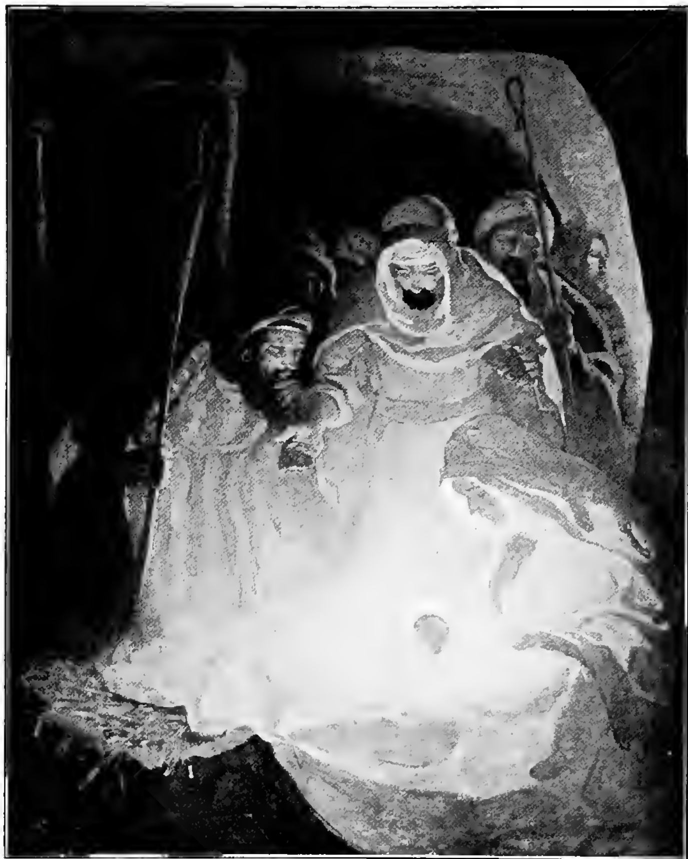
The shepherds approached softly, and there in the manger, wrapped in swaddling-bands, lay the young child.

It was, then, not a dream. This was the sign unto them.

"His mercy is on them that fear Him, from generation to generation," crooned the young mother as the shepherds drew near. "He hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree."

It was the hymn of the poor.

The shepherds entered softly. The morn-



It was, then, not a dream. This was the sign unto them

ing light stole into the recess and fell on the group, and the shepherds sank to their knees to gaze on the babe in wondering awe.

So, in the stable began the first worship of Him who came to save the world—Christ the Lord.

That day it was noised abroad that wonders had happened in the city of David, and in the country round about. It reached the ears of the authorities, and an investigation was made. In the time of the taxing all rumors were looked into. Theudas and Judas were the proof of how serious such rumors might be. But this report was traced to a few poor shepherds who, returning to the fields from a village, told a strange story of a babe born in a stable and of angels appearing and preaching peace and good-will to all men. No one paid any attention to them at the time. Only Mary, the young mother, kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.

Cæsar Augustus in Rome was celebrating his world-wide peace, and Herod Ascalonita

was too busy with his dreams of power to pay attention to such talk.

When, however, some months later it recurred and some Eastern travellers brought it again to his attention, with the story of an old prophecy from the Hebrew writings, referring to Bethlehem, Herod disposed of the matter finally by sending soldiers and slaying all the babes born in the village mentioned from two years old and under, including among them, it is said, even one of his own children, who was born there. But by this time, says the sacred record, Joseph, having been warned by God in a dream, had taken the young child and his mother and departed into Egypt.

THE SHEPHERD WHO WATCHED BY NIGHT

The place had nothing distinguished or even perhaps distinctive about it except its trees and the tapering spire of a church lifting above them. It was not unlike a hundred other places that one sees as one travels through the country. It called itself a town but it was hardly more than a village. One long street, now paved on both sides, climbed the hill, where the old post-road used to run in from the country on one side and out again on the other, passing a dingy, large house with whitewashed pillars, formerly known as the tavern, but now calling itself "The Inn." This, with two or three built-up cross streets and a short street or two on either side of the main street, constituted "the town." A number of good houses, and a few very good indeed, sat back in yards dignified by fine trees. Three or four churches stood on corners, as far apart ap-

parently as possible. Several of them were much newer and fresher painted than the one with the spire and cross; but this was the only old one and was generally spoken of as "The Church," as the rector was meant when the people spoke of "The Preacher." It sat back from the street, and near it, yet more retired, was an old dwelling, also dilapidated, with a wide porch, much decayed, and an out-building or two to the side and a little behind it, one of which was also occupied as a dwelling. The former was the rectory and the smaller dwelling was where the old woman lived who took care of the rectory, cleaned up the two rooms which the rector used since his wife's death, and furnished him his meals. It had begun only as a temporary arrangement, but it had seemed to work well enough and had gone on now for years and no one thought of changing it. If an idea of change ever entered the mind of any one, it was only when the old woman's grumbling floated out into the town as to the tramps who would come and whom the preacher would

try to take care of. Then, indeed, discussion would take place as to the utter impracticability of the old preacher and the possibility of getting a younger and liver man in his place. For the rest of the time the people were hopeless. The old preacher was past his prime; no one else wanted him, and they could not turn him out. He was saddled on them for life. They ran simply by the old propulsion; but the church was going down, they said, and they were helpless. This had been the case for years. And now as the year neared its close it was the same.

Such was the talk as they finished dressing the church for Christmas and made their way homeward, the few who still took interest enough to help in this way. They felt sorry for the old man, who had been much in their way during the dressing, but sorrier for themselves. This had been a few days before Christmas and now it was Christmas eve.

The old rector sat at his table trying to write his Christmas sermon. He was hope-

lessly behindhand with it. The table was drawn up close to the worn stove, but the little bare room was cold, and now and then the old man blew on his fingers to warm them, and pushed his feet closer to the black hearth. Again and again he took up his pen as if to write, and as often laid it down again. The weather was bitter and the coal would not burn. There was little to burn. Before him on the table, amid a litter of other books and papers, lay a worn bible and prayer-book—open, and beside them a folded letter on which his eye often rested. Outside, the wind roared, shaking the doors, rattling the windows, and whistling at the key-holes. Now and then the sound of a passing vehicle was borne in on the wind, and at intervals came the voices of boys shouting to each other as they ran by. The old man did not hear the former, but when the boys shouted he listened till they had ceased and his thoughts turned to the past and to the two boys whom God had given him and had then taken back to Himself. His gray face wore a look of deep concern,

and, indeed, of dejection, and his eye wandered once more to the folded letter on the table. It was signed "A Friend," and it was this which was responsible for the unwritten Christmas sermon. It was what the world calls an anonymous letter and, though couched in kindly terms, it had struck a dagger into the old man's heart. And yet he could not but say that in tone and manner it was a kind act. Certainly it had told the truth and if in tearing a veil from his eyes it had stunned him, why should he not face the truth!

He took up the letter again and reread it, not that he needed to read it, for he knew it by heart.

He reread it hoping to find some answer to its plain, blunt, true statements, but he found none. It was all true, every word, from the ominous beginning which stated that the writer felt that he had "a clear duty to perform," down to the close when with a protestation of good-will he signed himself the old man's "friend."

"You must see, unless you are blind,"

ran the letter, "that your church is running down, and unless you get out and let the congregation secure a new and younger man, there will soon be no congregation at all left. No men come to church any longer and many women who used to come now stay away. You are a good man, but you are a failure. Your usefulness is past."

Yes, it was true, he was a failure. His usefulness was past. This was the reason no Christmas things had come this year—they wanted to let him know. It pained him to think it, and he sighed.

"You spend your time fooling about a lot of useless things, visiting people who do not come to church, and you have turned the rectory into a harbor for tramps," continued the anonymous friend.

"You cannot preach any longer. You are hopelessly behind the times. People nowadays want no more doctrinal points discussed; they want to hear live, up-to-date, practical discourses on the vital problems of the day—such as the Rev. Dr.—— delivers. His church is full." This also

was true. He was no longer able to preach. He had felt something of this himself. Now it came home to him like a blow on the head, and a deeper pain was the conviction which, long hovering about his heart, now settled and took definite shape, that he ought to get out. But where could he go? He would have gone long since if he had known where to go. He could not go out and graze like an old horse on the roadside. There was no provision made for those like him. No pensions were provided by his church for old and disabled clergymen and the suggestion made in the letter had no foundation in his case. It ran, "You must or, at least, you should have saved something in all this time."

This sounded almost humorous and a wintry little smile flickered for a moment about the old man's wrinkled mouth. His salary had never been a thousand dollars, and there were so many to give to. Of late, it had been less than two-thirds of this amount and not all of this had been paid. The smile died out and the old man's face grew

grave again as he tried to figure out what he could do. He thought of one or two old friends to whom he could write. Possibly, they might know of some country parish that would be willing to take him, though it was a forlorn hope. If he could but hold on till they invited him, it would be easier, for he knew how difficult it was for a clergyman out of a place to get a call. People were so suspicious. Once out, he was lost.

At the thought, a picture of a little plot amid the trees in the small cemetery on the hill near the town slipped into his mind. Three little slabs stood there above three mounds, one longer than the others. They covered all that was mortal of what he had loved best on earth. The old man sighed and his face in the dim light took on an expression very far away. He drifted off into a reverie. Ah, if they had only been left to him, the two boys that God had sent him and had then taken back to Himself, and the good wife who had borne up so bravely till she had sunk by the wayside! If he were only with them! He used to be rebel-

lious at the neglect that left the drains so deadly, but that was gone now. He leant forward on his elbows and gradually slipped slowly to his knees. He was on them a long time, and when he tried to rise he was quite stiff; but his face had grown tranquil. He had been in high converse with the blessed of God and his mind had cleared. He had placed everything in God's hands, and He had given him light. He would wait until after Christmas and then he would resign. But he would announce it next day. The flock there should have a new and younger and abler shepherd. This would be glad tidings to them.

He folded up the letter and put it away. He no longer felt wounded by it. It was of God's ordaining and was to be received as a kindness, a ray of light to show him the path of duty. He drew his paper toward him and, taking up his pen, began to write rapidly and firmly. The doubt was gone, the way was clear. His text had come to his mind.

"And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping

watch over their flock by night, and lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. And they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them: Fear not, for behold, I bring unto you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger."

Unfolding the story, he told of the darkness that had settled over Israel under the Roman sway and the formalism of the Jewish hierarchy at the time of Christ's coming, drawing from it the lesson that God still had shepherds watching over His flocks in the night to whom He vouchsafed to send His heavenly messengers. On and on he wrote, picturing the divine mission of the Redeemer and His power to save souls, and dwelling on Christmas as the ever-recurrent reminder of "the tender mercy of our God whereby the Day Spring from on High hath visited us."

Suddenly he came to a pause. Something troubled him. It flashed over him that he had heard that a woman in the town was very sick and he had intended going to see her. She had had a bad reputation; but he had heard that she had reformed. At any rate she was ill. He paused and deliberated. At the moment the wind rattled the shutters. She did not belong to his flock or, so far as he knew, to any flock, and once when he had stopped her on the street and spoken to her of her evil life, she had insulted him.

He turned back to his paper, pen in hand; but it was borne in on him that he was writing of watching over the flock by night and here he was neglecting one of his Father's sheep. He laid aside his pen and, rising, took down his old overcoat and hat and stick, lit his lantern, turned down his lamp, and shuffling through the bare, narrow passage, let himself out at the door.

As he came out on to the little porch to step down to the walk, the wind struck him fiercely and he had some difficulty in

fastening the door with its loose lock; but this done he pushed forward. The black trees swayed and creaked above him in the high night wind, and fine particles of snow stung his withered cheeks. He wondered if the shepherds in the fields ever had such a night as this for their watch. He remembered to have read that snow fell on the mountains of Judæa.

At length he reached the little house on a back street where he had heard the sick woman lived. A light glimmered dimly in an upper window and his knocking finally brought to the door a woman who looked after her. She was not in a good humor at being disturbed at that hour, for her rest had been much broken of late; but she was civil and invited him in.

In answer to his question of how her patient was, she replied gloomily: "No better; the doctor says she can't last much longer. Do you want to see her?" she added presently.

The old rector said he did and she waved toward the stair. "You can walk up."

As they climbed the stair she added: "She said you'd come if you knew." The words made the old man warmer. And when she opened the door of the sick room and said, "Here's the preacher, as you said," the faint voice of the invalid murmuring, "I hoped you'd come," made him feel yet warmer.

He was still of some use even in this parish.

Whatever her face had been in the past, illness and suffering had refined it. He stayed there long, for he found that she needed him. She unburdened herself to him. She was sorry she had been rude to him that time. She had been a sinful woman. She said she had tried of late to live a good life, since that day he had spoken to her, but she now found that she had not. She had wanted to be a believer and she had gone to hear him preach one day after that, but now she did not seem to believe anything. She wanted to repent, but she could not feel. She was in the dark and she feared she was lost.

The old man had taken his seat by her side, and he now held her hand and soothed her tenderly.

"Once, perhaps," he said doubtfully, "though God only knows that, but certainly no longer. Christ died for you. You say you wanted to change, that you tried to ask God's pardon and to live a better life even before you fell ill. Do you think you could want this as much as God wanted it? He put the wish into your heart. Do you think He would now let you remain lost? Why, He sent His Son into the world to seek and to save the lost. He has sent me to you to-night to tell you that He has come to save you. It is not you that can save yourself, but He, and if you feel that it is dark about you, never mind—the path is still there. One of the old Fathers has said that God sometimes puts His children to sleep in the dark. He not only forgave the Magdalen for her love of Him, but He vouchsafed to her the first sight of his face after His resurrection."

"I see," she said simply.

A little later she dozed off, but presently roused up again. A bell was ringing somewhere in the distance. It was the ushering in of the Christmas morn.

"What is that?" she asked feebly.

He told her.

"I think if I were well, if I could ever be good enough, I should like to join the church," she said. "I remember being baptized—long ago."

"You have joined it," he replied.

Just then the nurse brought her a glass.

"What is that?" she asked feebly.

"A little wine." She held up a bottle in which a small quantity remained.

It seemed to the old preacher a sort of answer to his thought. "Have you bread here?" he asked the young woman. She went out and a moment later brought him a piece of bread.

He had often administered the early communion on Christmas morning, but never remembered a celebration that had seemed to him so real and satisfying. As he thought of the saints departed this life in the faith

and fear of the Lord, they appeared to throng about him as never before, and among them were the faces he had known and loved best on earth.

It was toward morning when he left. As he bade her good-by he knew he should see her no more this side of heaven.

As he came out into the night the snow was falling softly, but the wind had died down and he no longer felt cold. The street was empty, but he no longer felt lonely. He seemed to have got nearer to God's throne.

Suddenly, as he neared his house, a sound fell on his ears. He stopped short and listened. Could he have been mistaken? Could that have been a baby's cry? There was no dwelling near but his own, and on that side only the old and unoccupied stable in the yard whence the sound had seemed to come. A glance at it showed that it was dark and he was moving on again to the house when the sound was repeated. This time there was no doubt of it. A baby's wail came clear on the silence of the night from the unused stable. A thought that it

might be some poor foundling flashed into his mind. The old man turned and, stumbling across the yard, went to the door.

"Who is here?" he asked of the dark. There was no answer, but the child wailed again, and he entered the dark building, asking again, "Who is here?" as he groped his way forward. This time a voice almost inarticulate answered. Holding his dim little lantern above his head, he made his way inside, peering into the darkness, and presently, in a stall, on a lot of old litter, he descried a dark and shapeless mass from which the sound came. Moving forward, he bent down, with the lantern held low, and the dark mass gradually took shape as a woman's form seated on the straw. A patch of white, from which a pair of eyes gazed up at him, became a face, and below, a small bundle clasped to her breast took on the lines of a babe.

"What are you doing here?" he asked, breathless with astonishment. She shook her head wearily and her lips moved as if to say: "I didn't mean any harm." But no

sound came. She only tried to fold the babe more warmly in her shawl. He took off his overcoat and wrapped it around her. "Come," he said firmly. "You must come with me," he added kindly; then, as she did not rise, he put out his hand to lift her, but, instead, suddenly set down the lantern and took the babe gently in his arms. She let him take the child, and rose slowly, her eyes still on him. He motioned for her to take the lantern and she did so. And they came to the door. He turned up the walk, the babe in his arms, and she going before him with the lantern. The ground was softly carpeted with snow; the wind had died down, but the clouds had disappeared and the trees were all white, softly gleaming, like dream-trees in a dreamland. The old man shivered slightly, but not now with cold. He felt as if he had gone back and held once more in his arms one of those babes he had given back to God. He thought of the shepherds who watched by night on the Judæan hills. "It must have been such a night as this," he thought, as his eyes

"What are you doing here?" he asked

caught the morning star which appeared to rest just over his home.

When they reached his door he saw that some one had been there in his absence. A large box stood on the little porch and beside it a basket filled with things. So he had not been forgotten after all. The milkman also had called and for his customary small bottle of milk had left one of double the usual size. When he let himself in at the door, he took the milk with him. So the shepherds might have done, he thought.

It was long before he could get the fire to burn; but in time this was done; the room was warm and the milk was warmed also. The baby was quieted and was soon asleep in its mother's lap, where she sat still hooded, before the stove. And as the firelight fell from the open stove on the child, in its mother's arms, the old man thought of a little picture he had once seen in a shop window. He had wanted to buy it, but he had never felt that he could gratify such a taste. There were too many calls on him. Then, as the young woman appeared over-

come with fatigue, the old man put her with the child in the only bed in the house that was ready for an occupant and, returning to the little living-room, ensconced himself in his arm-chair by the stove. He had meant to finish his sermon, but he was conscious for the first time that he was very tired; but he was also very happy. When he awoke he found that it was quite late. He had overslept and though his breakfast had been set out for him, he had time only to make his toilet and to go to church. The mother and child were still asleep in his room, the babe folded in her arm, and he stopped only to gaze on them a moment and to set the rest of the milk and his breakfast where the young mother could find it on awaking. Then he went to church, taking his half-finished sermon in his worn case. He thought with some dismay that it was unfinished, but the memory of the poor woman and the midnight communion, and of the young mother and her babe, comforted him; so he plodded on bravely. When he reached the church it was nearly full. He had not

had such a congregation in a long time. And they were all cheerful and happy. The pang he had had as he remembered that he was to announce his resignation that day was renewed, but only for a second. The thought of the babe and its mother, warmed and fed in his little home, drove it away. And soon he began the service.

He had never had such a service. It all appeared to him to have a new meaning. He felt nearer to the people in the pews than he ever remembered to have felt. They were more than ever his flock and he more than ever their shepherd. More, he felt nearer to mankind, and yet more near to those who had gone before—the innumerable company of the redeemed. They were all about him, clad all in white, glistening like the sun. The heavens seemed full of them. When he turned his eyes to the window, the whole earth seemed white with them. The singing sounded in his ears like the choiring of angels. He was now in a maze. He forgot the notice he had meant to give and went straight into his sermon,

stumbling a little as he climbed the steps to the pulpit. He repeated the text and kept straight on. He told the story of the shepherds in the fields watching their flocks when the Angel of the Lord came upon them and told of the Babe in the manger who was Christ the Lord. He spoke for the shepherds. He pictured the shepherds watching through the night and made a plea for their loneliness and the hardship of their lives. They were very poor and ignorant. But they had to watch the flock and God had chosen them to be His messengers. The wise men would come later, but now it was the shepherds who first knew of the birth of Christ the Lord. He was not reading as was his wont. It was all out of his heart and the eyes of all seemed to be on him—of all in pews and of all that innumerable white-clad host about him.

He was not altogether coherent, for he at times appeared to confuse himself with the shepherds. He spoke as if the message had come to him, and after a while he talked of some experiences he had had in finding a

child in a stable. He spoke as though he had really seen it. "And now," he said, "this old shepherd must leave his flock, the message has come for him."

He paused and looked down at his sermon and turned the leaves slowly, at first carefully and then almost aimlessly. A breath of wind blew in and a few leaves slid off the desk and fluttered down to the floor.

"I have been in some fear lately," he said, "but God has appeared to make the way plain. A friend has helped me, and I thank him." He looked around and lost himself. "I seem to have come to the end," he said, smiling simply with a soft, childish expression stealing over and lighting up his wan face. "I had something more I wanted to say, but I can't find it and—I can't remember. I seem too tired to remember it. I am a very old man and you must bear with me, please, while I try." He quietly turned and walked down the steps, holding on to the railing.

As he stooped to pick up a loose sheet from the floor, he sank to his knees, but

he picked it up. "Here it is," he said with a tone of relief. "I remember now. It is that there were shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night, and the light came upon them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them and they were sore afraid, and the angel said unto them: 'Fear not, for behold, I bring unto you good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.'"

They reached him as he sank down and, lifting him, placed him on a cushion taken from a pew. He was babbling softly of a babe in a stable and of the glory of the Lord that shone round about them. "Don't you hear them singing?" he said. "You must sing too; we must all join them."

At the suggestion of some one, a woman's clear voice struck up,

"While shepherds watched their flocks by night,"

and they sang it through as well as they could for sobbing. But before the hymn was ended the old shepherd had joined the heavenly choir and had gone away up into heaven.

As they laid him in the little chamber on the hill opening to the sunrise, the look on his face showed that the name of that chamber was Peace.

They talk of him still in his old parish—of the good he did, and of his peaceful death on the day that of all the year signified Birth and Life.

Nothing was ever known of the mother and babe. Only there was a rumor that one had been seen leaving the house during the morning and passing out into the white-clad country. And at the little inn in the town there was vague wonder what had become of the woman and her baby who had applied for shelter there the night before and had been told that there was no place for her there, and that she had better go to the old preacher, as he took in all the

tramps. But in heaven it is known that there was that Christmas eve a shepherd who kept watch over his flock by night.

THE BIGOT

We had fallen to talking of religion, my friend, Abner Hood and I, as to which my friend had rather advanced views—holding that religion was progressive as well as civilization. He had relapsed into a reverie, from which he suddenly emerged with a gesture of decision:

"I had an experience once which I think had a decided influence on my views. I got a glimpse of the stern reality of Puritanism, whose shadow I had always felt, even in the West, where men are free."

He was satisfied with my interest, and proceeded:

My people came from W. (he mentioned a small town in New England), which had been a centre of the theocratic oligarchy which spread its steely tenets over New England and ruled it with a rod of iron. My grandfather moved first to Philadelphia

and then on to the Ohio River, to what was then known as the Far West, but is really only on the inner fringe of the Eastern seaboard. When he died my father had enough to do to bring up a growing family, all girls but myself, and we never heard much of our relatives back in the East. In fact, in those times I think the West rather prided itself on being independent of the East. A man who talked about his ancestry was put down as a poor specimen. It was only after the war, when the tide of foreign immigration swept in, that we began to value our ancestry, to talk of our connections back in the East, and boasted of being the old original Americans.

My father was killed in the war, in which I had also taken part, having run off from home to join the army, and when I reached home I was the only man of my name whom I knew, and I began to feel rather lonely. I accordingly decided one autumn to avail myself of the chance offered by a business trip to New York, to run on and take a look at the old home of the family in W.

and see if any members of the clan still survived. I conjectured that they had all long since disappeared. The only one I had ever heard anything of was an old great-uncle, about whom some mystery appeared to hang; but as he was my grandfather's eldest brother I imagined that he must have died long ago. My grandmother rarely spoke of him, and then with a lowered voice in a tone of severe moral reprobation, as "an unbeliever." It was clear that he was, when living, the black sheep of the flock, and the fact that we had not been beneficiaries in his will had not contributed to lighten his color. He had not cared for his own family, and was worse than an infidel.

I arrived at W. one crystal October afternoon, just the sort of an afternoon I had pictured as New England fall weather, with the Tyrian dyes of autumn flung all over forest and pasture, and the leaves on the ground like dappled sunlight. And, finding my somewhat breezy Western way received with stolid coldness and staring surprise, by those I first accosted, I soon laid it

aside for occidental use, and drew myself into a shell which I suddenly discovered somewhere handy about me for my encasement. As I descended from the jerky train at the tidy little station on the outskirts of the rambling village among the hills, I found myself eyed by the two or three persons about the platform, with an expression which was certainly not sympathetic, and, if it contained any hint of interest, it was close akin to mere speculation.

I inquired of the first person I came to—a thin, dust-colored man, with a slightly grizzled mustache, who appeared busy about small things—where I could find the hotel. His only reply was a call:

"Sam, here's a man wants to go to Simpson's."

A voice sounded from somewhere: "A-all ri-ight," and an ancient vehicle, which I later learned was known as the "Old Ship of Sion," because "she had carried many thousands," and "would carry many more," hove slowly in sight from behind the station, piloted by a stout individual with a dyed

mustache of some weeks' standing. I got in with my bag, which suddenly appeared to me twice as heavy as usual, and we drove slowly off in the direction of the cluster of houses I had seen among the big trees in the distance, with a solid-looking brown church shouldered out from among them.

We passed a number of newish houses, white or yellow or brown, hugging the road-side, and reaching out with modern enterprise toward the railway station; but soon passed beyond them into a broad, curving avenue bordered by great elms, interspersed with ash, sugar-maples, and oaks, golden or scarlet from the autumn nights. Behind these were houses of a wholly different type, some built on the street line, some set back in yards; but all with harmonious proportions, ornamental door-ways and cornices and dormer windows, bearing a sort of resemblance, as of members of a family grown old together, and still preserving their air of distinction. Some had wings, with porticos; some had none; but all had certain features distinctly alike. A few

children were seriously playing about in the walk-way, but most of those I saw were joylessly raking up the leaves. We passed the church, which stood in an open space by itself. It was the only building without trees about it, and its bareness appeared to give it a certain air of being set apart; but this may have been due to its square and block-like proportions and its thick, heavy spire, with a great white clock-face in its front, on which in huge black characters was painted the stern warning: "Memento Mori."

I had soon got to talking with my driver, who, while a dry and brief-spoken person, appeared to be something of a philosopher, and possibly, even, of a humorist. My first inquiry as to the hotel received a prompt response.

"Pete's? Oh! I guess he'll take you in. He's taken in a good might before."

As this was enigmatical, I inquired about the fare.

"Oh! it's purty fair. They ain't been no manna rained down—not lately—and I

ain't heard of no quails bein' blown this way exactly—not this season; but if you've got good teeth I guess you can sustain life."

About this time he apparently decided to ask me a few questions.

"Travellin' man?"

"Well, no—not exactly."

After a pause:

"Lookin' for horses?"

"No, not exactly."

"Lookin' for land?"

"No, not exactly."

A longer pause. Then:

"Well, exactly, what air you a-lookin' fur?"

I thought this a propitious time to elicit some information, so I said:

"Well, exactly, I came to see somebody by the name of Hood, or, failing him, somebody who might be related to the old family of that name who used to live here. Is there anybody of the name living here now?"

"Yep—guess there is, unless old Ab's

passed away as he's lived, without askin' anybody's edvice or leave."

"'Old Ab'?—who's he?"

"Just old Ab—so—old Abner Hood 't lives in the old house on the hill, like an owl in his tree, and don't see nobody from year's en' to year's end."

"Why, how does he live? How old is he?" I asked in one breath.

He answered the latter question first.

"If he's as old as they say he looks, he must be nigh on a hundred. I guess from what I've heard that he's in and about ninety year."

"Didn't you ever see him?"

"Yep—when I was a lad I see him often when we boys used to go up the hill for chestnuts and peeked at him of a evenin'. I guess it's twenty year since I las' seen him."

I was now much interested. He might be my great-uncle.

"What was he doing? Is he an invalid?"

"Just perambulatin' up and down. No, I don't know as he is. He's got a man

there as looks after him, named Simon Morse, and I see him last year once or twice."

"Is he mad?—the old man, I mean."

"Not as I knows on—least, no madder than he's been this sixty year, since he first shut himself up and said, 'Farewell, vain worl'.'"

"Well, what's the matter with him?"

"We-a-ll—they say he had a blight—I don' know, but he certainly had somethin'."

"'A blight?'"

"Was disapp'inted in his affections. Well, he's disapp'inted a good many since."

"How?"

"By holdin' on. There's some several been waitin' for him to git out; but he'll see 'em through yet, if his old house don't fall down on him one o' these here windy nights. And they'll never git a cent, anyways."

"Who are 'they'? What are their names, and what relation are they to him?" I asked.

"The Kinsies and the Wynnses. I don't rightly know how nigh they be—some—the older he gits, the nigher they gits. But they needn't," he chuckled; "he'll never have nothin' to do with 'em in this worl', nor the next, if he can help it."

"Well, tell me, what sort of house does he live in?" I had determined to seek him out, if possible.

"Oh! It was once a fine house—the biggest abaout here—they called it The Hall onct—but it's purty well tumbled down now. You have to look for it to find it among the trees, and but for it's bein' so high up the hill you couldn' find it at all. They say the bushes grow up through the porch. You see, he's somethin' of what you might call a re-cluse."

It did look so.

I dropped my bag at Simpson's hotel, an uninviting-looking inn; and slipped out without registering, making some excuse about "a walk before dark."

I determined not to seek out the other relatives who were more distant, of whom

my friend had told me; but to slip up unobserved if I could, and go boldly and try to see my old uncle. So, having succeeded in getting away, so far as I could tell, without anybody's suspecting my destination, I made my way in the direction my friend had indicated, and soon recognized the house he had described, on the middle slope of a long wooded hill which commanded the village. It was at sight the retreat of a recluse. The road which had once led up to it from "the street," as the high-road was called, had been walled up and planted in shrubbery, now grown to trees. The entrance to "the grounds," where there had once been stone pillars and an iron gate of some pretension, was now situated in a tangled wild, the pillars dilapidated, and the gate buried a foot in the soil. Within, the grounds had become a wilderness, where the trees grew thick, and the tangled shrubbery filled the intervening spaces in an impenetrable jungle.

I had expected, after my guide's account, to find some obstructions in my way, but nothing comparable to this inextricable tan-

gle. But, after reconnoitring sedulously the surroundings of the front of the grounds, I skirted the place and, making my way up along the side through the wood, "fetched a compass," and, climbing a rotten wall, struck into the bosom of the wilderness as boldly as my beating heart would allow. It happened that my easiest line of approach led me through trees and shrubbery to a point at the back of the house, which faced somewhat to the west. As I emerged I found a tumble-down stable and barns once extensive, and a stretch of open ground at the back, flooded by the light of the declining sun—a sort of lawn between the thickets which screened it on the sides, and beyond it a pathway and a sort of track up into the wood above.

But what arrested my attention more than all the rest was the figure of an old man, tall and spare, with long white hair on his shoulders, walking slowly up and down on the grass plot, an old hat slanted over his eyes, his hands behind his back. He was clad in a long frock-coat with a high collar, and a stock about his throat gave him the

appearance of a past age, such as I had seen in pictures, but never in life.

Taking courage of my fears, I at length stepped forward and advanced across the open space, toward a point where I might intercept him at his next turn. He turned as I expected, and, looking up, caught sight of me. He stopped short. His figure straightened, and he wheeled abruptly, and, with a step of such unexpected firmness that it appeared like a stride, he gained the small porch which led to the back door of the mansion. I thought he had escaped me; but I kept on steadily, and, with his hand on the knob, he suddenly turned, and, apparently reconsidering his intention, took a step forward and awaited my approach, his whole countenance and figure expressive of resentment. Determined, if possible, to conciliate him, I lifted my hat and accosted him respectfully:

"Good-evening, sir."

"How do you do? What do you want?" he demanded, sternly.

"I have called to pay my respects to you,

sir, as the head of our house." I spoke very deferentially, observing him closely—as he also was observing me.

"Who may you be? And where do you come from?" he demanded, but little placated.

"I come from the West—from the State of ——, and my name is Abner Hood."

"Abner Hood! How did you come by that name? And by what right do you invade my retirement?"

"I come by it honestly," I said, smiling a little, "and I have taken the liberty of intruding on you because I wanted to know you."

"Why should you wish to know me?" His eye was suspicious and his tone was cold.

"Because I have your brother's blood in my veins—" I began, but he interrupted me.

"Cain had the blood of Abel's parents in his veins, the theologians say, but I am not aware that that proved affection. David and Joab had common blood in their veins,

but the former's last message to his son was to slay Joab, and he slew him at the altar. It has not been my experience that common blood proves affection, and I have had longer experience of life than you, young man."

I thought that his talking so much was a propitious sign, and his manner had relaxed a little, though his words were still hostile; so I said:

"I assure you, sir, that I am neither Cain nor Abel—only Abner—who, if I recollect aright, had more cause to complain of Joab than Joab of him."

The old fellow gave a grunt.

"I see that you still know something of the Bible." But his manner softened. And I continued:

"I assure you that I want nothing from you, but to know you and pay my respects to you as one of your younger kinsmen—possibly your nearest."

"I have no near kinsmen," he interrupted shortly. "Those I had I found a little less than kin and a good deal less than kind."

"I know nothing of that. I have never done you any wrong, except to intrude to-day, as you say, on your privacy, and I ask your pardon for that, in consideration of my real desire to meet you and be friends with the only male relative I have in the world."

Again he gave me one of those shrewd glances, after which he appeared to be considering. And I stood waiting, conjecturing what his reply would be to my appeal.

"Whose son did you say you were?" he asked at length. I told him my father's name, and that of his father: "Jedediah Hood."

"Jed's grandson, eh!" he muttered, and looked me over from under his bushy eyebrows. "Why didn't they name you after him? Didn't like the name, I guess; means 'Beloved of the Lord.'"

"No, sir, I don't think that was the reason. They preferred yours."

"Eh?"

I almost thought I had lost my chance, he remained so long in reflection. He, however, decided in my favor.

"Wait a moment." He opened the door and went into the house, closing and locking the door behind him, with a loud grating of the key in the huge old lock. Again I felt that my visit had been in vain. A moment later, however, I heard his voice calling some one, and in a little while the key turned in the lock again, the door opened, and I was invited in.

The entrance was a narrow back hall, which was closed at the far end by a door which I later found admitted one into a somewhat spacious front hall, from which a pretty, colonial stairway led up to the floor above. We did not, however, now pass the further door, but turned off from the first hall by a little passage, past what was evidently the kitchen, and with another turn entered a sitting and living room in the back of one of the wings. The furniture in it was meagre, and was old and worn; but it had once been handsome. The large arm-chair, beside the table near one of the windows, was, like the table, of carved mahogany now black with age, and it had once been covered

with red velvet, though only portions of the upholstery now remained; and the seat was now filled with old papers flattened on the broken, crooked springs. A few time-faded prints hung on the walls, among them portraits of Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Samuel Adams, and James Otis; also an old-fashioned allegorical tree of many roots and branches, representing the Tree of Knowledge, with a serpent curled about its stem, and the Virtues and Vices—the latter in somewhat undue proportion—springing therefrom. There were many books, generally old, in a bookcase with a glass front, and lying about on chairs, or piled on the boxes in the corners. On the table lay a large old Bible worn to tatters. An old flint-lock musket, with a powder-horn tied to it, hung on the wall, and a rapier or dress-sword and a sabre were crossed below them. I was offered the arm-chair, but, of course, took another one—the only other in the room.

As soon as we entered the house the old man became the host, and treated me with a

graciousness wholly different from his former manner, into which he only relapsed occasionally when reference was made to his past.

After his apology for bringing me into such an untidy apartment, which he explained by saying, "Old age has few wants, and warmth and quietude are chief among them," he began to ask me a few questions as to my family; but he was rarely interested enough in my replies to make any comment on them. Once he said:

"Did your father ever tell you why he went West?"

I knew he meant my grandfather, of course; but I replied:

"No, sir."

He gave a short grunt.

"We quarrelled."

"I am sorry for that, sir. I never heard it."

"No, we Hoods were always close-mouthed."

After wondering what the cause of the quarrel was, and giving him a chance to

cast light on it, I ventured to ask him what it was about.

"About Religion. Bigotry, cupidity, and brutality are the three chief causes of dissension. All have their sources in selfishness."

"Well, there isn't religion enough to quarrel about now," I said. It was the first thing I had said which appeared to please him.

"Quite true," he observed. "As far as I can judge—for I never go out—you are quite right. It is perishing out of the earth—slain in the revolt against superstition and bigotry.

"What church do you belong to?" he suddenly demanded. I told him that I had never united myself with any church, because I did not think myself good enough to do so; but had always looked forward to joining my mother's church, which was the old Established Church.

"Well, I should think you were quite good enough to join that church now," he said, with a faint gleam of humor in his

deep eyes. "You cannot be a very wise man."

"How is that?"

"Why, as you are, you are among those judged—but if you joined the church, you would be among the judges."

Wishing to get off the subject of religion, which appeared to engross his thoughts, and to learn something of his history, I grew bolder.

"Why did you never marry?" I asked him suddenly. A change came over his face—his whole person, I might say. A flash came into his eye, and his form stiffened. I felt that I had made a mistake, and was about to try to rectify it, when he said:

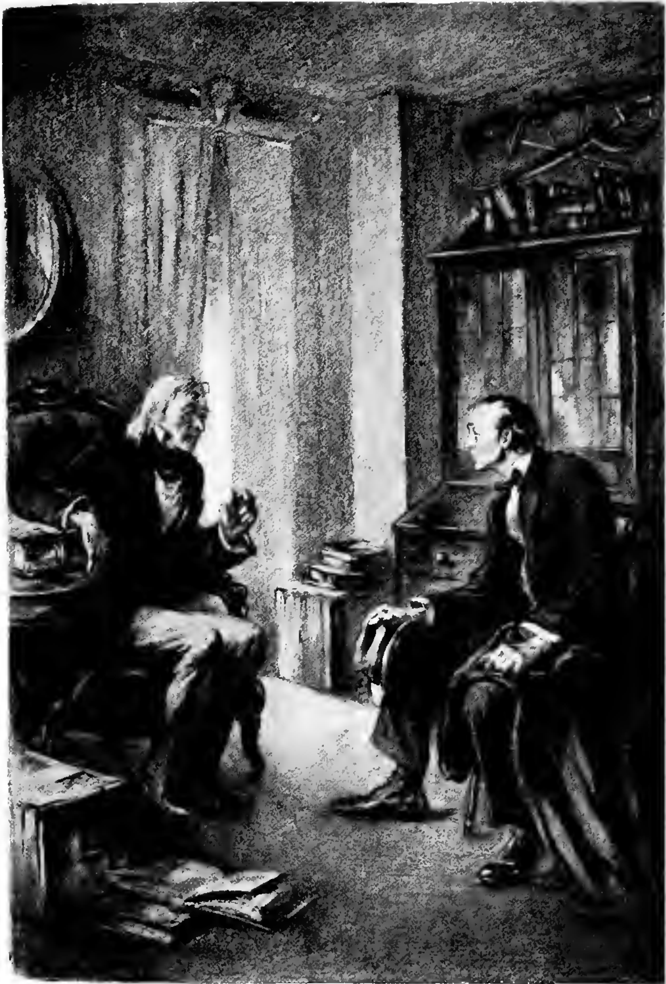
"Did they never tell you?"

"No, sir, not a word."

"Well, I will, if you have the patience to listen.—Because I was fool enough to be honest—and others could not bear the truth."

I assured him that I was deeply interested, and he told me his curious story.

"I was your father's elder brother" (he always spoke of my grandfather as my father) "and as such I came into possession of this estate on my father's death, your father receiving his portion in money and other property, which I dare say he soon squandered in riotous living, for he was always inclined to be wild and light, while I, on the other hand, was sober, frugal, reflective, and earnest. As the property was an ample one—more than ample—I determined to secure a helpmate; but I had a high ideal. I was ambitious to preserve an ancient and honorable name, and I was very proud—proud of my position, proud of my intellect, proud of my knowledge. My opening mind had discovered that this little corner of the world was a very small and narrow corner, and that men had been shackled by others in a slavery worse than African slavery—the slavery of the mind—but, having been born in this slavery, I had not initiative to break my bonds and declare my freedom. I was the slave of John Calvin and his offspring, and, while I could not at



I assured him that I was deeply interested, and he told me his curious story

heart subscribe to his frightful tenets, I lived bound to the stake he had planted, and tortured by the perpetual fires he had kindled, and which the iron-divines of Predestinary doctrine had blown through each succeeding generation. What your father and others like him took lightly, I shrivelled before, and at one time I even thought of adopting the ministry as a means of salvation, not for others, but for my miserable self.

"I was saved from this by meeting and becoming enamoured of a young woman, the daughter of one of our leading elders, himself a stern and unbending believer, who would sooner have been damned himself than not have believed that others would be damned. She had been absent at an academy while I was at college, and about the time of my return home to assume my duties as my father's successor, I met her, for the first time in years. I had known her in her pretty childhood as a wild young hoiden with gazelle-like eyes. But she had fallen under the spell. She had ripened into all

that her childhood had promised—and more—only she had become demure and serious-minded beyond anything that could have been believed. Her sobriety, however, simply added to her charms, in my then state of mind, and I fell desperately in love with her, and had the happiness to have my passion returned. Gifted with intellect far beyond the majority of her sex, she inspired me to study and opened up to me new vistas of thought. We read much together, and, as Theology was the chief subject in those days, we studied it together, but, while the more we read the stronger grew her belief, the stronger grew my doubts—doubts which I hesitated to tell her of, for fear of imparting them to her and causing her some of the unhappiness I was experiencing.

"Wishing to see something of the outside world before settling down, and also desiring to add to the furnishing of my home in a manner suitable to my means, and thus testify my devotion to her, for she was poor, I determined to visit New York. In those days we travelled much of the way in stage-

coaches, and I spent a number of days in company with a fellow-passenger who made a deep impression on me. He was a divine so different from any one that I had ever hitherto been thrown with, that he at once gained both my confidence and my affection. He was a youngish man, with a gentle, refined face and burning eyes such as I never saw equalled. I was first attracted to him by his tenderness to a bereaved mother who happened to be a fellow-passenger with us in the earlier stages of the journey, and who was in her first paroxysm of desolation over the death of her only child. His sympathy drew from her not only an account of her bereavement, but the secret of her inconsolable anguish. A preacher to whom she had applied for consolation had told her that there were 'infants in hell a span long, predestined to damnation,' and in her agony she had conceived the idea that her child might be among them. Her reason had become almost dethroned.

"'Madam,' said our clergyman, 'the man who told you that was not only a brute and

an idiot, but was a blasphemous brute and idiot. That man was not teaching from the gospel of Jesus Christ—who likened the kingdom of heaven to a little child—but from his own hardened heart.' And then he began to expound to her—I ask his pardon in heaven, where he now is—I mean he began to talk to her of the love of God, of his tenderness and loving care, in a way which not only soothed her and brought her peace, but calmed the storm which had so long been raging in my breast.

"I sought the first opportunity to open my heart to him, and he at once began to remove my doubts—preaching, and proving from the Bible, a gospel so widely different from the decrees of wrath that I had been accustomed to hear pronounced from the pulpit, that, for the first time in my life, I began to get an idea of God's goodness and fatherhood, and that night I prayed in humility and love, and not in rage and fear.

"He dealt with my questionings as to Adam's fall, Predestined damnation, certain miracles, and Literal Inspiration in so con-

clusive a manner that I wondered I had not comprehended it before, only my mind had been blinded by the false prophets of wrath. He repudiated Literal Inspiration as unreasonable; but accepted Plenary Inspiration as consonant with reason. Christ's work, he declared, was not in the least dependent on miracles, nor was it taught in the Bible that Salvation depended on belief in miracles. Yet His greatest miracle was not raising Lazarus from the dead, but raising a dead world from corruption and sin. Salvation was a matter of the heart, not of the head. Christ's death and passion were not needed to reconcile God to man, but to bring men to God. God was Love, and his justice was not what hard men had distorted it into; but was tempered by the infinite pity of an infinitely wise and compassionate Father, who pitied his children, knew their infirmities, and remembered that they were but dust.

II

"I RETURNED home sooner than I had intended. So relieved was I by the teaching of my new evangel that I was eager to impart it to my betrothed. I only remained long enough to forward the new furniture for our home, which I had purchased in New York with the joy of one who feels that he is rendering homage to the most beautiful and perfect of God's creatures.

"The evening I arrived was prayer-meeting evening, and I never attended a divine service with such a feeling of joy and reverence as that. Every one, of course, attended, and Miss ——, my betrothed, was the cynosure of all eyes as we entered together; for I had arrived only in time to call for her and have a blissful ten minutes before leaving for church, in which I placed on her hand the jewel I had got in New York to celebrate our engagement. She informed me that it had been decided to appoint me an elder in place of an old man who had just died and that I had received every vote but

one, that of a man named Wynne,—who was a distant relative of some kind,—and whose son had been an unsuccessful suitor of Hilda Morrison's. The devotional part of the services I participated in with more fervor than I had ever done before; for my heart was filled with thankfulness, and I could listen without a tremor to the man-imagined wrath of a man-imagined Deity. I only awaited an opportunity to explain to my betrothed the happy change in my condition.

"I had not long to wait. It was the custom among us then for different men to be called on to speak in the meeting, and, by a sort of common consent, it appeared, it had been determined to call on me and ask me to give a sort of account of my trip and its necessarily novel experiences. Accordingly, when the regular devotional exercises were concluded, the pastor called attention to the fact that I had just returned from distant parts, and that it was greatly desired by my friends and fellow-citizens that I should give them some account of my experiences during

my travels, and particularly any new spiritual experiences I might have had.

"Encouraged by a smile from my betrothed, I rose and gave them a general outline of my travels, with an episode or two which they appeared to consider sufficiently diverting, and then I started to take my seat; but I was again interrogated as to whether I had heard any of the great preachers, and, if so, as to my opinion of them. I replied that, while I had heard a number of them, the man who had made most impression on me was a fellow-traveller, and I proceeded to relate my experience with my friend and the effect of his teaching on my views.

"Borne on by my feelings, I made a complete confession of my questionings—of the slough of despond into which I had sunk, and of my providential escape therefrom, with the joy and peace that I had since been conscious of. I spoke well, I know, for I spoke from my heart.

"If you can imagine a snow-fall in the midst of summer warmth, you will get a

faint idea of the reception of my words. First a dead silence fell on them, and then a murmur of such disapprobation and hostility as might have greeted me had I preached a universal and horrifying damnation instead of the unspeakable mercies of a compassionate and all-wise Father. I sat down and looked around, to encounter only an appalled and appalling horror. I looked at my betrothed. She was as pale as though I had confessed to some terrible crime, and sat with trembling eyelids and white lips, overwhelmed with consternation. The congregation rose in icy silence. The elders, by a tacit consent, drew together and, after a word or two, they gathered about the preacher and moved toward his room back of the pulpit, one of them turning at the door and saying solemnly that I was desired to wait a few moments in the church. I had not known till then how grave was my situation, but I felt relieved that I had unburdened my soul. I had spoken the truth, and I was ready to abide the consequences, however serious they might be. A few of

the congregation also remained, grim, aloof, and silent.

"In a few moments the door of the room where the elders were in session opened, and one of my judges desired my attendance. I walked in and knew instantly that my sentence had been passed, and that nothing I could say would avail.

"'Mr. Hood,' said the preacher, with an accent of doom, 'it is not necessary after your voluntary and appalling confession this evening for us to state the grounds of our action. It is sufficient to say that you can no longer remain connected with this church, which is a church of God. Your removal, immediate and final, has been unanimously decided on by us.' He was here interrupted by one of the elders, a stony-faced individual by the name of Wynne, with two steely eyes drilled above his hatchet nose. He objected to the word 'removal' as being too mild. The word he had written in the resolution was, he declared, 'expulsion.' This was agreed on, and, with a bow, I walked out.

"In my new-found happiness I was not even then wholly overthrown. I was able to thank God that I felt no rancor toward them. I simply pitied them for their blindness, and I looked forward to the happiness of my home, chastened by a sense of my own unworthiness, but sustained by the sympathy and confidence of my wife. While cast down, therefore, I was far from destroyed.

"When I walked out, my betrothed was sitting as I had left her, and when I approached her she rose and joined me without a word, and we left the church together. At the threshold I offered her my arm, and she laid her hand lightly on it, but the touch, light as it was, thrilled me. The night was dark, but I did not take note of it till later. Her presence was light enough for me. For a time she was silent, as I was; but presently she asked me quietly what had occurred when I was called before the elders. I told her that I had been turned out of the church. She gave a little exclamation of horror, but, beyond her 'Oh!' she made no comment,

and we walked on in silence. After a few moments she withdrew her hand from my arm and walked a little further apart from me. I observed it with a certain pang, but as she was engaged in removing her glove, I made no remark upon it. We had by this time reached her father's door, and she stopped, as I thought, to express her pent-up sympathy, but instead, she held her hand out to me.

" 'I want to restore this to you,' she said, in a calm tone.

" 'What is it?' I held out my hand, and she placed in it our engagement ring, the jewel I had placed on her finger but a few hours before, with a renewal of our vows of life-long confidence and devotion.

" 'If you have been turned out of the church, I cannot marry you.'

"I was so overwhelmed that all I could say was, 'Do you mean it, Hilda?'

" 'I do, Abner,' she said.

" 'Have you reflected on it, Hilda?'

" 'I have, Abner.'

" 'Is this irrevocable, Hilda?'

" 'It is, Abner.'

" 'Then good-by, Hilda,' I said.

" 'Good-by, Abner,' she replied.

"I turned and came away. It was only when I stumbled at the gate that I remarked how dark the night was. As I climbed the hill, the church-clock tolled the midnight hour. I have never heard it since without feeling my heart crushed anew beneath its iron hammer.

"Since that hour I have lived in exile—the exile of the heart.

"Now you know why I never married," he said, grimly, after a silence in which he had been reflecting on his strange past, while I watched him with a new tenderness for the lonely old man who had fallen a victim to a cruel bigotry burnt into his blood.

He began to speak again.

"For a time I thought that possibly she might relent; but I did not know the unfathomable depth of bigotry—and when no sign came, I shut myself up and gradually withdrew from all association with men."

"But did you never see her again?" I asked.

"Certainly not."

"What became of her, sir?"

He paused a moment before he replied. Then he said grimly:

"I never inquired."

"How have you lived?"

"Oh! very well—sufficiently well. I had an old man to look after me, and when he died his son took his place, and I suppose when he goes I shan't need another. Years ago certain persons claiming to be my kin undertook to try to regulate my affairs; but I soon shut them off. Your father was one of them. I imagine he meant well; but I wished to forget mankind as they had forgotten me. Since then I have never gazed voluntarily on a woman's face. I have not seen a man, until you came to-day, in I do not know how many years—twenty perhaps, and I do not know why I permitted you to come in, unless it be that I am getting in my dotage. Possibly, your name or something about you reminded me of a time that I had

thought almost obliterated from my memory."

"But," I said, coming back to the main cause of his embitterment, as I thought, "you know the world has moved. Many now go much beyond what you declared as your conviction."

"No doubt. I have seen as much intimated," he said dryly. "In the reaction they have come to believe nothing. But I believe." He laid his hand on the old tattered book on his table. "I cannot but believe. It alone has sustained me."

"What did my grand—" (I hesitated) "father do? Did he take sides against you?"

"No. He wished me to yield my principles—to make overtures to—however, it is so long ago now, it is of no use to open that long-sealed past. He took life more lightly. He did not know how deep was my wound." He drifted off into reflection for a few moments.

"Where did you say you lived?" he asked suddenly. I told him.

"Write it down." I did so, signing my name —"Abner Hood, Jr."

"If you come this way again next year, you may come and see me." He rose.

Seeing that my visit had been ended by him, I thanked him and took my leave, and, as I shook hands with him at his door, I felt again that sudden tenderness for the old man that I had felt once or twice before during the interview.

"Good-by, uncle," I said, as I held his withered and wrinkled old hand, with its high veins and thick brown freckles, and laid my other hand on it. "If you ever want me or want anything done that I can do for you, telegraph me and I'll come immediately."

"Good-by. I hardly think I shall want anything. I have passed wanting."

As I forced my way back through the tangled thickets, I made my plan to leave at once, so as to escape the questioning of my driver or of the host at Simpson's. And so I did. I kept my room under plea of fatigue, and then, having paid my bill, took my bag

and walked down to meet the night-train. It was late, owing to an accident, and, as I waited, I heard the village clock toll sullenly the same midnight hour to which my lonely old kinsman had listened so often.

Some months later, in the spring, I received a despatch signed "Simon Morse," announcing the death of the old man. Without waiting to procure a black suit, I took the first train for the East, and went to W. There I learned that the old hermit had passed away three days before, and was to be buried that afternoon, apparently with much pomp. The town was full of excitement over the event. The difficulty of access to the place, the mystery connected with his life, and other circumstances combined, had started a hundred different stories as to the old man's rigorous seclusion, varying all the way from madness over a broken-off love-affair to the commission of some heinous crime. It was said generally that he had died without a will, and that his nearest heirs were the not very near cousins in the village, with whom he had always been on bad terms.

I made my way up the hill by a winding track which the supposed nearest of kin had had made for the occasion through the thickets which had so long filled the grounds.

As I passed the church in its bare lot, I observed that many flowers and plants were being carried in from a fine florist's wagon with the name of a neighboring town on it in flaring letters, and that a grave had been dug in a lot near the door.

On arrival at the house, I found the front entrance, closed for so many years, opened, and quite a concourse of vehicles and people, drawn by curiosity, gathered in the grounds. Having asked one of the men, apparently busy about the funeral, where I might find the deceased's old attendant, I received in reply a solemn and silent wave in the direction of the door; so I entered to make my way back in the direction of the old man's living apartment, where I had visited him. I was surprised to discover what a handsome house it was. Though sombre and musty and dusty from being so long closed, the hall and the apartments opening on it

were handsome, and the hall, with its beautiful cornice and tasteful old stairway, was distinguished. A number of old paintings hung on the walls, all draped, however, in coverings gray and brown with dust and cobwebs. The carpets on the floors were soft with the dust upon them. The walls were scarred and streaked with the damp and mould of many years, and the ceiling had fallen in places where the rain and melted snow had soaked in from some rotted section of the roof.

I made my way back to the rear, and discovered that the old man's apartment was the scene of considerable bustle. It was filled with a party of, perhaps, half a dozen or more elderly men and women, dressed in black, and very busy examining the papers and rubbish taken from the desk and boxes which stood open about the room. As I opened the door without knocking—manifestly to their great surprise—they had had no time to desist from their occupation. I was asked somewhat shortly what I wanted, and explained that I was looking for Mr.

Hood's old attendant, whom, I had been told, I might find there.

"He is somewhere outside," said one of the women, with a wave, as she returned to her work, while another one added:

"This room is reserved for the family."

With an apology, I withdrew, and before long came on an old fellow dressed in a long-tailed coat and a very ancient high hat, who, though not displaying many signs of mourning in his raiment, showed so much real sorrow in his face that I instantly picked him out.

"Are you the old gentleman's attendant?" I asked.

"I be," he said; "leastways, I was till two days ago."

I knew by his expression and tone what he meant.

"I want to see you outside." He gave me a swift look, and with a quick glance around, signed to me to precede him. At the silent sign from him, I walked on, and he followed me outside to the back, where I had first seen the old recluse strolling up

and down in the evening sunlight. Here, without apparently looking at me, he made a sign in the direction of the shrubbery, and I walked on, he moving obliquely, as though going in another direction, but, once in the screen of the thickets, he joined me.

"Be you Abner, Jr?" he asked briefly, and on my nodding assent he added dryly: "I been expectin' you."

He then told me the story of the old man's last hours. He had been as well as usual—"He had taken to talkin' of you a mite," said he, "and was lookin' forward to your comin' back. He said he allowed he was gittin' in his dotage. That was only the night before. That night he was readin' his Bible till late—I saw the light under his door. Here is something for you." He took from his inside pocket, with great deliberation, a letter, carefully sealed, and addressed in a tremulous, but still strong hand to "Abner Hood, Jr., Esquire."

"Is this his handwriting?" I inquired.

"It be—every word—he wrote it the day

before he was taken—that is, he copied it off fair that day. He'd been a-workin' at it on and off for some time before. He was particular abaout where he was to be buried —said he didn't want to lie in the shadow of that church."

I opened the packet and found it to contain, as I had conjectured, a will, wholly written with the old gentleman's own hand, and in the quaint phraseology of the past.

After declaring his abiding belief in God, "Who alone judgeth the hearts of men," and committing his soul to His infinite mercy, he directed that all debts, if there were any, should be paid; that his faithful attendant, Simon Morse, should have the privilege of living on the place during his life free of rent and should be paid an annuity of several hundred dollars a year; that I should have the house with all it contained, and so much ground as I might, in my unfettered judgment, deem necessary to support it, and that all the rest and residue of his property should be divided into two equal shares one of which was to be mine abso-

lutely and in fee simple, and the other was to be applied by me to such charitable objects as I might select, including alike individual cases and public charities, I to be the sole judge of the proper beneficiaries, and not to be called to account for any acts of mine in connection therewith by any person except God. The only conditions were that I was not to give in aid of bigotry or superstition, and that I was to see that he was decently and privately buried on his own land, on the hillside facing the east and overlooking the village of W. And, finally, I was left residuary legatee and sole executor of the will.

"It's all right, ain't it?" demanded the old attendant.

"I think so; but, at any rate, I am his next-of-kin and his heir."

His eyes gave a snap of satisfaction, and something like the ghost of a smile flitted about the corners of his mouth.

"Now, we'll bury him as he said," he said briefly.

"We will," I nodded. "We'll carry out

his wishes to the letter. But we shall have to get the grave dug."

"It's all ready," he said. "I dug it myself last night, and just covered it over with boughs so they wouldn't know. You see, I thought you'd come."

"I wish I had come before," I exclaimed, thinking of the old fellow's loneliness.

"Well, I don't know," reflected Simon. "He didn't like folks araound much. 'Pears like they pestered him."

"But I feel sure he would have seen me."

"Maybe so. He might. He talked of you considerable. But it appeared to stir him up some. He allowed he was gittin' in his dotage. 'Twas next mornin' after writin' his will he had a stroke."

"The very next morning!"

Simon nodded with conviction.

"The very nex' mornin'. He was settin' in his cheer when I went in—speechless—and I seen at onct he had a stroke. He was still reasonable, and I made out he wanted me to send for some one. I thought first 'twas the doctor, but he shook his head.

Oh, he was reasonable enough! When I thought o' you, he nodded his head—so." (The old chap nodded so violently that he shook his hat off, which apparently caused him much concern. When he had brushed and replaced it, he proceeded:) "Well, he didn't live long. He went so fast I couldn't leave him to call for anybody—and 'twas just as well, I guess; they'd 'a' pestered him, and he didn't want 'em. Soon as he was gone, I went down and notified 'em, and they come like ravens. I never see sich grief! 'Twas most ridiculous. They turned the house inside out." (I could not help smiling inwardly at the old fellow's idea of "inside out.") "At first I was like their long-lost brother. I had 'done so much for him—had been like his own son. Did I know of any will? Did I know whether he had any other kinfolks?'—and a hundred other things. Well, I've told so many lies in my time, 't I thought a lie or two more wouldn't make no difference, so I told 'em he was always so close-mouthed they wouldn't believe it, and if he had any other kinfolks I

guess they'd 'a' tried to hunt him up and save his property, if not his soul. And then you'd ought to seen 'em change. They no sooner thought that they was safe than 'Poor Simon' was the dirt under their feet. They ordered me araound's if I was their slave, and never had been no emancipation proclamation, nuther. They been peerin' and speerin' everywheres till it's scandalous, and they been a-hintin' that they more than suspicionate as how I have stole all the old man's money and silver.—But sich as there is, is in a box in the hole on the inside of the big square chimney and the key is in the secret drawer at the back of his desk. And now I guess you know what to do?"

"I guess I do, Simon," said I, "and first I want to say to you that whatever happens you may live where you like and do as you like, and you will be made comfortable."

"I should like to live here," said Simon, "and look after his grave and the grass plot and the caow."

"You shall do it," I said, and we walked back to the house by different ways.

I walked in once more at the front, and, finding the door of one of the rooms open which had been closed when I passed through before, I entered the room, which proved to be the old drawing-room, and found the body laid out there in a coffin, which, with its plated ware, appeared not only handsome, but almost gay. The glass portion of the top was open, and an important-looking undertaker was standing near by, completely absorbed in admiration of the company that were now assembling. As I gazed on the old man's form, lying so placidly and with a certain high scorn on his marble face, I could not help the tears welling up in my eyes at the thought of the long suffering he had endured at the hands of unbending bigotry—his own no less than that of others.

I passed on to the back apartment, and this time entered, followed after a minute by Simon, who had been awaiting me. I found the family sitting portentously in their chairs, their black gloves on and long veils ready to be lowered. Again they stared at me, and more than one informed me in

a low but positive tone that this room was "reserved for the family." But as I entered and appeared somewhat at home, I observed looks of some disquietude exchanged among them.

Finally, as I still remained somewhat stolidly gazing about me, two of the women rose, and, going over to the eldest of the party, held a whispered colloquy, of which I was evidently the subject. At length the latter walked over toward me and said:

"I guess you have made a mistake. Perhaps you didn't understand that this was the decedent's private apartment and has been reserved for his folks till time for the funeral."

"I know," I said; "but I am one of his kin."

"Ah! What I mean is, his *near* kinsfolks: you are hardly one of them." He was looking at my gray suit, of which I suddenly became conscious. His tone had grown irritated, and I made no reply, which appeared, from their nods, to encourage them all.

"Did he leave no will?" I asked presently.

"He did not."

"That he didn't," exclaimed all the women sharply, in a chorus.

"I shall have to ask you to withdraw," said the elder of the men, assuming a very imperative tone, "as your questions and your presence are offensive to these ladies. If you do not—Go and ask David Mallow to come here." He addressed old Simon over my shoulder.

"Who is he?" I asked, turning to Simon.

"The constable—the taown-officer."

"Well, I have no intention or desire to be offensive to these ladies, or to you either," I said; "so I am going. But before I go, I want to explain to you that Mr. Hood did leave a will." It was like a bomb to them.

"Left a will! I don't believe it!" exclaimed more than one of them, rising in a flutter, aghast at the announcement. The spokesman, however, waved silence.

"How do you know?" he demanded, sarcastically. "I have proof positive that he did not leave a will." He nodded in the direction of Simon.

"Because I have it, and I am the executor, and, what is more, I am his next of kin." I opened the door and walked out, followed by Simon, who remained only long enough to answer one question. Before he closed the door I heard my name repeated, "Abner Hood, Jr.!" in some consternation.

I passed forward to the front of the house, and, seeing the clergyman there, I drew him aside and apprised him of my uncle's selection of the spot for his grave, and, having satisfied him by showing him the will, I requested him to make the necessary arrangements as to the change in the plans. This he civilly undertook to do, and when I went back a half-hour later, after seeing the grave, I found everything ready for the interment, in accord with my uncle's wishes. The "family" were seated in the drawing-room, at the head of the casket, the ladies with their veils now drawn close enough, and, as I did not wish to be offensive to them, I kept outside by the door.

The old custom of passing around to view

the remains before the coffin was closed was still observed there, and, though I had thought of stopping it, I yielded to the clergyman's suggestion that I permit it, and I was glad afterward that I did. The throng that passed around was, it is true, led to it only by curiosity. But at the very end a little old figure in dingy black, with a faded dark veil, appeared in the line. I had observed her as she climbed painfully up the hill a short time before, her figure very bent, and her step very slow and painful. She had remained in the background in a corner till the last. Then she came forward. She paused a moment at the side of the coffin to raise her veil, that she might get a look at the face, and my heart hardened as I thought of the curiosity that would lead even so old a woman, at such pains, to gaze on a corpse; but suddenly she drew from the folds of her dress a little bunch of crumpled flowers, and laid them tenderly on the dead man's bosom, and, bending over the body as though to redraw her veil, she tremblingly touched her wrinkled hand softly to his cold

brow, and I saw some tears dropping silently.

"Who is that?" I asked of a man near me.

"That's old Miss Hilda Morrison—lives in the little old tumble-down house behind the church. She's in and about ninety years old, I guess."

She was his betrothed. She had lived, like my uncle, in life-long exile of the heart.

When the procession moved, I kept near the old lady I had seen, and, as we climbed the hill, I offered her my arm.

"Won't you let me help you? I am a stranger here," I said. She took it without a word, except to murmur her thanks; but on the way up she asked me if I would mind telling her my name.

"My name is Abner Hood," I said, gently, "and I know who you are." Her hand clutched my arm, then relaxed, then took it again, and I felt her head pressed softly against my shoulder. And from that time she leaned on me firmly.

THE TRICK-DOCTOR

I

It was some years ago, before the old relation between the "white folks" and their old "servants" in Virginia had so changed as it has of late, and yet when the change had already begun.

In the late afternoon of a spring day, Doctor Hunter had just come in from his rounds about the neighborhood, and had laid his hat and gloves on the old piano in the sitting-room, and placed his worn riding-whip beside them in a wilderness of books, flowers, and nondescript articles, when the door opened and his wife entered. She appeared always to know by some instinct when her husband arrived.

"I did not see you ride up," she said, as if she had failed in some duty. "You didn't get to see Jane?"

"No," said her husband, "I did not get

down in the direction of The Bend—I was detained, that child was so sick. I will go there the first chance I have—I don't suppose there is much the matter with her—except malaria."

Mrs. Hunter looked sympathetic. Jane had been a favorite servant, and now she was ill. "I am afraid she is in rather a bad way. Old Moses was here to-day and he reports her as very badly off. He seems to be in great trouble about her. He was very anxious to see you. He says there is a man up here from the city—a sort of preacher who is turning the people against him—wants to be the preacher at Mount Hagar, himself."

The doctor grunted—"I heard down the road that there was a young city negro up here stirring them up. I must look into it."

"He was very much disturbed about Jane," said Mrs. Hunter. "I will see if he has gone." She left the room.

"Hysteria, probably—" mused the old physician. "She may be mad."

A few moments later there was a knock

on the door, and a tall, elderly negro man, very black and with bushy white hair, entered. His white collar gleamed high against his black skin. In his hand he carried an old and much battered beaver hat, which he deposited carefully on the floor.

"Good-evenin', master."

"Howdy do, Moses? How is everything with you?" inquired the doctor.

"Tollerble, master—tollerble, suh—ev'y-thing is tollerble, thankee, suh—yes, suh. How is you, master?" It was the old form of salutation.

"I'm pretty well, thank you. How is Jane? Your mistress tells me that she has been ailing?"

The doctor spoke as if the old man had not replied at all.

"Yes, suh—Jane—she's tollerble po'ly. I'se right smart troubled about her, suh—yes, suh."

"What is the matter with her?"

"Well, suh, I don't rightly know. Some folks thinks she's been—" He shambled and hesitated, and glanced around the

room—"Some folks thinks as how she mus' 'a' been tricked," he added with conviction.

"Ah! Tricked? I thought, Moses, you had more sense."

"Well, suh, I don't edzactly say as *I* thinks so; but some folks thinks so—her mammy thinks so—and she certainly do act mighty erresponsible—yes, suh, she certainly do."

The doctor reflected. "Who says she's been tricked? How long has this been going on?"

The old man laid one long, black forefinger in the horny palm of the other hand and began to count—"Dthat young man have been here five Sundays—or, maybe, hit's six—I disremembers which it is rightly—and she was tooken just about de second week after he come."

"What young man?" The doctor was interested.

"He's a young colored man—from Richmond—he says—he's a sort of doctor——"

"A doctor! I thought he was a preacher?"

"Yes, suh, dthat too; but he's a sort o'

doctor—not a doctor like you, master—but a sort o' sperits doctor——"

"A spirit doctor? What sort of doctor is that? What sort of things does he do?"

"Well, suh, he ken show you a thing in de hand, dat you ken see dyes as plain as dat dyah book on dat table, an' nex' minute it ain' dyah, an' you'll fine it jis as likely as not in you' hat or in yo' pocket."

"Ah! I see," said the doctor, with a nod of satisfaction. His scepticism was not lost on the old darky.

"An' dat ain' all," he continued. "He done fin' things dthat no one else ain' know nothin' about—dat's what I air talkin' about. Why, he fin' de trick-charm sewed up in her baid—sewed up *in* it—'way in de middle o' de shucks!"

"Ah!"

"Yes, suh, he did dat thing—I see him wid my two eyes. And dthat ain' all!" he added, seeing a look of amused incredulity come over his old master's face. "He went out and find another trick-bag in de middle of a hollow tree right by de spring—in

de very middle—cause I see him when he put he han' in and fin' it right whar he tell me to cut."

"Why, he had it in his hand all the time," ejaculated the doctor.

"Nor, suh, he didn't—cause he had done roll up he sleeves to git his arm in de holler and he striched he hands wide open—so—" He illustrated with outstretched hands, palms down.

The doctor chuckled.

"Der is de skorripins and things dthat dee conjure wid—you never see nothin' like dem things dat's in 'em—hyah and finger-nails—and tacks an' dried insecks, and worms, an' bat-wings, and I don't know what all— Dee is de things dee done set ag'inst Jane to destroy her health, and los' her soul. And he says he kin cure her."

The doctor nodded with satisfaction. "And what does he want for this cure?"

"Dyah 'tis!" said Moses briefly. "He say he ken cure Jane; but he got to have de deed to my place to do it—he cyan do nothin' tell he stan' in my shoes——"

"Ah! I see—I thought so—" muttered the doctor. "Well, you are not fool enough to do that, I hope?"

"Nor, suh—I'se mighty pestered—I done offer him bofe my pigs and de chickens; but he say he got to have land—cause she come from de dust and she got to go to de dust again—dat de cuss is in de lan'—or dem whar own it. An' he ain't got de power to help her long as I got de lan'." He pondered deeply. "Sometimes dat man talk mighty curisom—you might think *I* had done trick her de way he talk. I hear he tol' some of de elders dat it was somebody mighty nigh to her what bring dat trouble pon her and dat he's got to give up all he's got and stan' befo' Gord naked befo' he kin meck de 'tonement. I thought, maybe, 'twas her mammy; but he said hit was somebody dat's versed in de Scriptures—and you know Ria cyarn even read her Bible—not very good—so it mus' be me he's signifyin'."

"I see— I see— You say he's a preacher?"

"He done meck 'em tu'n me out, suh."

The doctor wheeled and faced him—"It isn't possible!"

"Yes, suh— Nex' Sunday is de las' time I is to preach at Mount Hagar."

"Well, it's an outrage!" protested the doctor.

"Yes, suh, 'tis!" said the old man simply.

The doctor reflected. "We must see about this. I shall look into it——"

"I sho'ly wish you would, suh, cause dat man done tu'n me out o' my pulpit and tryin' to tu'n me out o' my place."

The doctor came very near swearing. It manifestly encouraged the old darky to be more confidential.

"You don't know what a bad man dat is." He lowered his voice and approached him slowly, with his tall figure bent forward. "He says de ain' no sich place as hell!"

He spoke in a horrified tone hardly louder than a whisper.

"Says there is no such place as hell!" exclaimed the doctor, subduing the twinkle in his eyes— "Why, I never heard of such a thing! Why, it's—it's positively outra-

geous! Why, in a month I shan't have a sheep left on my place!"

"Nor, suh, dthat you wouldn't!" exclaimed the old man in a tone of sympathy and of conviction. He stood slowly shaking his head in an attitude of deep dejection. "I'll tell you de fac', master, if dyah ain' no mo' hell, I don't want to live no longer!"

"Well, there ought to be one if there isn't," agreed the doctor, "for just such gentry as he. What is his name?"

"He call hisself 'Doctor Simon.' He say he name is Dr. Simon Jambers——"

"Ah! Well, he ought to be a sorcerer with those two names—Janes and Jambres seem to be still contending with Moses—ah?"

The old darky was listening attentively—

"Dthat's in de Bible, ain't it?"

"Yes."

The old man gave a nod of satisfaction and a glint came into his eyes.

"Ken you lay yo' han' pon dat place?"

"Why, yes, I think so— It's in Timothy, I know——"

"Ah! well, if it's in Timothy, I ken fin' it— I 'members de name very well——"

The doctor rose and walked over to the door of the wing-room which he used as an office. As he opened it he turned solemnly and said: "I will give you a little physic for Jane. I must come down and see her—and, meantime, I will give you something to give her which will take the trick off. Come this way."

An expression of mingled relief and hope came over the old man's face as he stepped forward.

"Yes, suh— Yes, suh— I'se mighty obleeged to you— I'll gin 't to her, sho— Dat's des what I wants her to have."

The room which they entered was one that certainly looked as if it might have been the workshop of some old practitioner of the black art. The floor was bare, except for an old worn deerskin or two; the black mahogany furniture with carved heads and wings had been originally covered with horse hair, but now it was broken and worn in places and the springs stuck up. The table

was covered with books, papers, and bottles in what others might have considered a litter; which the doctor, however, always declared the perfection of order. A bookcase, filled with medical books and what the doctor termed generically, "apparatus," lined one side of the room and on the other was a large double press with glass doors; behind one of which was a conglomerate array of bottles of every size and hue, while behind the other, partly veiled by the remains of an old green curtain, was an old and very shaky skeleton which might have been the victim of some of the ingredients the bottles contained.

The old negro, as he entered the sanctum, insensibly moved on tiptoe, and his face assumed an expression of undisguised awe as his eyes roved around the apartment and finally rested on the glimmering white bones behind the glass door of the press. The old doctor was quite oblivious of his presence. The effort required to open the drawer shook the press sufficiently to set the skeleton to shaking, and one of the arms slipped

from the pin on which it rested and was falling forward when the doctor caught it.

"Ah! old man, you are getting tired of standing there, are you?" he said, as he replaced the arm carefully. "Wait a little longer. Don't be in a hurry to come down —I may have further use for you. There's a young man who maybe will have some work for you to do. Good-evening—" He shut the door softly and turned to the table where his glass stood. He was talking of his son who was beginning to study medicine and he was not aware of the effect of his words on his companion.

But old Moses' eyes were bulging, his bushy white hair was standing on his head. He interpreted the doctor's words literally as applied to the case of his daughter and the young trick-doctor. It gave him at once a new feeling of awe and of infinite respect for his former master.

This was increased when the doctor, after much mashing and mixing of a blue substance on the bottom of a plate, rolled up two bluish pills, and, putting them with a

number of white ones in a small round box with a skull and bones on the top, held the box out to him with a solemn injunction to give his daughter both the blue pills that night, and six of the white ones next morning —and to follow them up with spoonfuls of the liquid from the phial. Moses was about to take the box when he observed that on it was a red picture of a skull and cross-bones, and he started back with an exclamation:

"Lord, master, what is dat?"

"Take it," said the doctor sternly. "I am trying to save your daughter, and this will do it if you do as I tell you."

The old man took it, trembling, holding it much as if it were a coal of fire.

"Yes, suh. Yes, suh, I'm gwine do jest like you say—on'y I'se sort o' skeered o' dem things——"

"Your daughter will be one of them soon if you don't follow my instructions," said the doctor.

"Yes, suh, I'm gwine to foller 'em, sho," faltered the old negro.

"Well, don't let that young man know anything about it——"

"Nor, suh, he ain' gwine know nuttin' 'tall about it. I ain' gwine to say a word to nobody."

"And if you can keep that rascal away from there, so much the better—in fact, you must keep him away."

"Yes, suh, I am gwine to do dat too—ef I kin," he added with a touch of pathos.

"Well, if you can't, I can," said the doctor, "and, maybe, it would be just as well to let him be there when I come; but don't let him know I am coming, you hear."

"Nor, suh—I won't do dat," said Moses.

II

The road which the doctor took next day lay through a low-lying district of swamps and "mashes" in the bend of the river from which it took its name, "The Bend." Here the negroes in the first flush of freedom had established a settlement, where they lived to themselves.

When the doctor arrived at the old preacher's house, he was impressed by the fact that it was the best of the score or more

of homes that composed the colored settlement. Most of them were ordinary cabins with little clearings of an acre or two about them and a rickety out-building or two near by. But Moses' home was a two-story frame structure with a little porch, and the out-buildings were in good shape, while the fields about the place showed the care of a good and industrious farmer.

"Naboth's Vineyard," reflected the doctor, as he cast his eye over the signs of thrift. His gaze rested on a buggy, with a scrawny horse hitched to it, standing near the door, and an expression of speculation came into his mild eyes.

As, having tied his horse, he approached the door, the sound of a woman's moaning, accompanied now and then by a man's voice in a high nasal tone, caught his ear. He paused and listened. The woman appeared to be in much pain or distress; and the man was explaining it; for fragments of the colloquy reached the doctor.

"Yes—you are worse than you were—You feel worse, don't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"As I told you— Your enemy is after you again——"

The woman moaned and there was a buzz within from some one else. "I felt sure of it—all the signs related it— As I told you, you must put yourself in my hands before I can help you. Do that and I can cure you—otherwise you have not long to live."

"Yes, suh."

"If your father will sign the paper I can cure you—if not, I am powerless— The malign influence is too strong— The power of evil that keeps him from helping me to take away the spell on you, keeps you in misery and will sink you in torment——"

There was a moan of fear attended by the low expostulation of some one.

"Now, I will show you— Although I removed two days ago the conjure-bag that your enemy put in your bed, I will show you that another one has been placed there since— You will all see——"

The buzz within grew louder—and at that

moment the doctor walked up, and pushing the door wide open, stepped inside.

The apparition brought the proceedings within to a sudden halt.

In the little room which was partly darkened by a thin red curtain hung over the single window were a half-dozen persons, most of them seated around the fire. In a corner the patient, a young woman, very black, but now ashy with terror, lay in bed, her eyes now drooping, now fastened on the man who stood above her. At the foot of the bed sat an old woman with arms folded, rocking backward and forward in mingled fear and grief. Two or three young slatterns sat a little further away, their expression divided between apprehension and curiosity, while over the bed of the terrified patient bent a young, slim mulatto dressed in a long, loose, black coat. At the moment he was making slow passes with his hands. On his fingers were several rings, and about his neck were hung two or three chains and strings of beads to which were attached a number of charms.

At the apparition of the doctor there was a sudden cessation of the incantation. The young man straightened up and fell back from the bed with an exclamation of surprise—the women rose from their chairs.

"Hello! What is going on here?" demanded the doctor. He addressed the conjurer. "What are you doing to that woman?"

"I am her physician— She is very sick and I am endeavoring to cure her." He had recovered himself and was trying to impress the spectators.

"You look like a physician— You are endeavoring to kill her—and appear to be in a fair way of doing it." He turned to her mother. "Where is Moses?"

"He had to go to see the Justice—" began the woman.

"He was unexpectedly called away this morning," interrupted the young mulatto.

"And you are taking advantage of his absence to kill his daughter."

"No, sir, I am employing the means of Psychotheripee to relieve her pains."

At the moment he was making slow passes with his hands

"Psycho—what?" demanded the doctor, taking a paper from his pocket, and holding it out to him. "Write that down."

"Psychotheripee— You have surely heard of that?"

"Oh, yes— I have heard of it. Go ahead and write it down."

"Well, you see," began the young man, "I don't happen to have a pen and ink."

"I have a pencil," said the doctor inexorably, handing him one.

He walked to the door and, glancing out, said: "Come in Moses, I want you to see 'the doctor' work." The old negro came in somewhat reluctantly and took a seat near the doctor which the latter had indicated. His expression was one of great gravity.

The mulatto took the pencil and turned to the window. He knew that the eyes of all the negroes were on him and he was on trial. He wrote slowly and handed it to the doctor, who read the word, "Sychertherripee."

"Ah, yes," he said, and put the paper

back in his pocket. "Now go ahead and let me see how you proceed."

The negro looked at him keenly and then swept the room with a swift glance. All eyes were fastened on him. It appeared to decide him.

"Well, you see," he began, in a voice intended to impress the audience, "I cannot guarantee that the supernatural powers will testify their presence in the company of—er—strangers— They require a sympathetic audience——"

"Oh! nonsense!" said the doctor, rousing up a little. "Go ahead, and let us see, or else confess yourself an impostor."

"No, sir, I am not that," declared Simon. "I will give you the proof—if I can get the proper—er—atmosphere."

"Humph!" grunted the doctor. "Open the door, Moses."

"No, I don't mean that— I have light enough——"

The doctor's grunt this time was one of contempt.

"Don't open it," he said to the old negro,

who was proceeding to carry out his order, and now stood near it. Turning his back to the window, the doctor settled himself as if for a nap, only his feet were drawn up close to his chair. The mulatto continued to talk on monotonously, addressing the others, but evidently to impress the doctor. He moved about quietly, ostentatiously pulling up his sleeves, and he "discoursed" of the wonderful dealings of the spirits, using a curious jargon of mingled lingo and scientific terms.

As the negro with much talk and many movements of the hands and arms proceeded to perform his acts of legerdemain —so wonderful to the ignorant, so natural to the initiated—his dusky audience were wrought up gradually to the highest pitch of wonderment and alarm—and exclamations half religious, half terror constantly broke from them, which gradually appeared to act on the trick-doctor and excite him to renewed acts. Now and then he cut his eye at the doctor, who appeared to have lost interest in him and was now on the border-

land of a doze. At length, the trick-doctor appeared satisfied. He gave a last shrewd glance at the doctor, whose eyes were almost closed.

"I feel sure that the evil spirits have been at work. You all see that I have nothing in my hands—" He waved them in the dusk, palms down— "I will now show you that I was right. The trick has been worked again. I feel sure that I shall find in the mattress the same bag which I discovered there the other day. Watch the chimney—one of you—" All eyes turned toward the fireplace. He leaned over the bed.

At this moment there was a slight noise behind him—an arm shot by him and his right hand was seized with a grip of iron. "Open the door, Moses," said the doctor— "Ah! I thought so— Look there." He had given the trick-doctor's arm a wrench which brought the palm into view, and there held fast in the palm by the doctor's firm clutch was a little black bag. The doctor caught it as it dropped on the bed. "Get

out," he said, as he turned the mulatto loose and moved to the door, where with his pocket knife he cut the bag open. It contained the usual assortment of charms: hair, tacks, a dried frog, a beetle or two, etc., etc. The other occupants crowded about him with wide eyes while he inspected them, but now and then turned their gaze timidly on the sorcerer, who stood glowering in the rear. One or two of them after a moment at a sign from him moved back nearer to him, where he began to whisper to them the explanation that that was a trick which the person who laid the spell sometimes performed. "You all saw that I didn't have anything in my hand," he whispered sullenly.

The doctor caught his meaning if not his words. He turned on him sharply. "Get out," he waved toward the door. "There'll be an officer here for you soon." He stood pointing to the door and the mulatto passed out with an angry gleam in his eye.

The doctor watched him climb in the buggy with the lean horse and drive slowly down the road into the woods.

Then he turned to the patient. When he finished his examination, he said: "I'll cure her if you keep that rascal away from here —if not, he will kill her."

"Yes, suh, I'll keep him away," said Moses.

"And if you can't keep him away, I can."

"Yes, suh, I'll keep him away from heah now," said Moses firmly. He had been overawed, hitherto, by his belief in the supernatural; but now that this terror was disposed of he was on ground that he knew, and was gaining courage every second, as he showed next moment. A whisper and nervous giggle among the women at his back caught his ear. He turned on them— "Ain't you got no better manners'n dthat?" he demanded sternly. "Don't le' me have to speak to you agin—and don't any of you try to git dthat man back heah again—I don' want to have to lay meh han' 'pon none o' you—cause it's heavy."

As the women shrank back abashed, he turned again to the doctor.

"Yes, suh, I'll keep him away from

heah," he said, with the dignity of an old chief. "He may git meh chutch; but he won't git dis place—not ef evy woman whar wyahs a shif on dthis river perishes."

"Now, come with me home," said the doctor, "and I will give you something that will cure her. If there is any more tricking tried, I will take a hand in it myself."

"Yes, suh," said Moses with conviction —"I been see you." He had in mind the doctor's conversation with the skeleton.

When Moses returned home from the doctor's he bore with him certain compounded drugs in which that experienced practitioner placed much reliance in cases of malaria and all its attendant troubles. But he had also that in which he himself placed more reliance. He had got the doctor to find and mark for him in his Bible every reference to the miracles of Moses and to the sorcerer, Simon. For Moses had still one more battle to fight.

The young mulatto, with his college education and his wonderful performances, had

made too deep an impression on the sable element of the community to be disposed of by a single encounter. It was indeed generally given out that he had won the contest and established his power. He had circulated the story that he had found the charm, and the doctor had proved it. The fact that he had had it in his hand all the time was denied by a half-dozen witnesses.

The doctor had advised Moses to unmask the rascal and prove to his neighbors and flock how his tricks were performed; but Moses knew a trick worth two of that. He also knew his flock better than the doctor did. He proposed to unmask his rival, but in a way that would relieve him of future peril. Accordingly, he took his own course. For the remainder of that week he plunged in study of the Bible, and only emerged to discourse of the learning and power of his former master, to drop dark hints of his interviews with the dead in the secret sanctum of his office, and to prophesy as to the wonders that would be shown the following Sunday.

Meantime the doctor had some correspondence with the authorities back in the region from which Dr. Simon Jambers had, according to his own account, come. The result was reassuring—and before the end of a week a stranger with a quiet, unemotional face and cold eyes came from the city with a letter to the doctor from his correspondent there.

"That is not his name," said the detective. "His real name is Simon Jones, but he has a number of aliases. If he is the man we want, he is a keen one. He is a great hand at legerdemain and has got piles of money out of the fools that trust him."

"He is the man," said the doctor.

"But how can we catch him? He is as sly as a rat."

"We will find him at church Sunday evening," said the doctor. "He is to preach there."

The detective rarely smiled; but he did so now. "He must be the one," he said.

III

The following Sunday night the large colored church in the woods which the negroes had first called Mount Zion, but which had come to be known as "Mount Hagar," because the doctor had, with some humor, dubbed it "Mount Hagar in the Wilderness," was packed to more than its capacity. Both within and without its whitewashed walls the sable congregation teemed and steamed. For it was known that that night the old preacher, Brother Moses Johnson, was to preach his farewell sermon. His rival, "Preacher Simon Jambers," whose wonderful powers as a trick-doctor were by report only equalled by his gifts as a preacher, had according to rumor supplanted him, and Moses had to go. The younger man was, it is true, a new-comer, and no one knew much about him; but he had education and he had made a deep impression on the newly freed congregation. He could read fluently at sight anything shown him, and it was even asserted by

some, mainly on his own testimony, that he could read a "dead language," which only the most learned white people could read. Besides this, he had, according to all reports, shown powers which no other "colored white-gent'man" had ever been known to possess, at least in equal degree. He not only could lay spells—which others could do—though they were mainly old persons; but he could divine, and he could exorcise—in the language of the negroes he could tell if anybody had "put a trick upon you," and "ef you'd jest trus' him," he could take it off—and it was more than half believed that he could "put a trick" or spell on a person himself. With these endowments he was a man of power among the newly freed population of the Bend.

Had the big preaching at Mount Hagar, at which Moses was to preach his last sermon, taken place a week earlier, there is no telling what the effect would have been. In the preceding weeks Doctor Simon had as good as ousted Brother Moses from his cure and had so wrought on his flock that there

was great danger that the old man would be driven out of the community, if indeed he did not suffer bodily harm at the hands of his excited flock. The new-comer had begun to regard the old man's place as his own, for at that time it was known throughout the neighborhood that the young negro was working in this direction, and with his power to cast spells, few negroes cared to resist him. The last week, however, had brought a certain change in the case. It became known that the doctor—the "sho'-nough doctor" as they called him—had been down to see Jane, the chief object of the new-comer's ministrations, and had openly scouted with derision the idea that he possessed any occult powers. "He is just a plain, every-day charlatan and rascal," declared the doctor to every one he came across. Certainly, something had occurred which had given Moses the power to "stand up against him" and, furthermore, Moses, who had been in abject terror of him, but a week or two before, now appeared not only to fear him no longer, but actually to have

the courage to withstand him. Still, there were many adherents of the new man who stuck to him and contended that he not only had the powers he claimed, but would display them signally the following Sunday night at Mount Hagar. "Jes' wait," they said, and shook their heads ominously at the dire possibilities at which they hinted so mysteriously.

Thus, long before the hour when the preaching usually began, the grove about the building was filled with vehicles of every description, from old single-stick gigs and rickety, high-pitched carriages, which had somehow survived the war and come into possession of their sable owners, to new buggies, shiny with oil-cloth, and farm wagons bristling with chairs. The church itself bulged with the congregation, and the sound of intermittent chanting began to arise and float out at the windows with the pungent odor of the "musky, oiled skin of the Kaffir." The platform was filled with chairs for the inordinately solemn and important-looking elders, mostly with gray hair, and

two larger chairs were placed well to the fore on either side near the pulpit for the rivals. The building could not hold the congregation that had assembled.

The afternoon had been peculiarly close and sultry with heat-lightning and the distant rumble of thunder to the westward, and as the dusk fell the clouds began to deepen along the western horizon and the grumble of thunder took on a deeper and more ominous growl. The young preacher was on the field early—in the impressiveness of a black coat and shiny beaver, and with a dazzling watch-chain. His smug air of assurance encouraged his followers and cast a corresponding gloom over the older part of the congregation.

Moses, however, was later than usual in reaching the church—so late, indeed, that before his appearance there was considerable discussion going on as to whether he would appear at all, many declaring that he did not dare to meet the test. He had been seen that afternoon going in the direction of the old doctor's and had not been heard of since.

This report was beginning to take on the form of his having been seen in flight from the neighborhood, when, just after a long rumble of thunder, the old man appeared, coming down a woodland path, with his old high hat and long, flowing coat, his old Bible under his arm and his heavy stick clutched in his hand. As he passed across the rough church-yard, though he acknowledged with a silent bow the half-suppressed greetings of the groups near him, he looked neither to the right nor left.. He kept his eyes on the ground as if in deep meditation. Only when he reached the door he turned and scanned the sky up which the dark-blue cloud was steadily mounting—then, as if satisfied, he took out his large watch and consulted it thoughtfully, turned and entered the church, and made his way to the platform.

It was arranged that the new-comer should read and pray first, and then that Moses should preach. It was Doctor Simon's own suggestion, and at the appointed time he rose with a flourish and, advancing to the desk, opened the Bible which lay

thereon, and began to flutter the leaves backward and forward till he found the "portion of Scripture" which he proposed to read. His assurance and ease made a marked impression and when in his high nasal tone he proceeded to read fluently in a staccato manner the chapter he had selected, the entire audience were undoubtedly much impressed. Then he prayed a somewhat discursive and protracted prayer. It was, indeed, possibly too protracted; for the evening was sultry, and there was toward the end a decided shuffling of feet and restlessness on the part of his auditors, while another portion were too quiet and gradually fell into the placidity of slumber. Something had evidently disturbed him. His chief card in particular failed. He expressed his gratitude for having been given power to show signs and wonders and to overcome the wiles and evil designs of one who had been deceiving his hearers and whose ignorance he had been able to make manifest. But the same words which on the last Sunday had excited the congrega-

tion to frenzy, now unexpectedly fell almost flat. It manifestly disconcerted him and he began to ramble and repeat himself. He changed his tone and became more threatening. At this moment, as he was about to begin his attack which was to thrill his audience and sweep them away—in the door-way appeared two white men—the old doctor and another. The young man had just got well under way when the tall form that he knew so well emerged from the throng in the aisle near the door, followed by a stranger. They were brought up by the elders and were seated on the platform. It was a staggering blow to the young preacher—for his prayer dealt largely with a matter which he could not well discuss with freedom before so influential a white man as the doctor, not to mention the stranger, who now sat on the other side, a little behind him. He was a spare, vigorous-looking man with a strong, immovable face and a cold eye, and as he sat in his chair he was as detached as fate. He brought a vague association to the new apostle and though Simon could not quite

place him, it made him wander and circle in his discourse, and, finally, he closed almost abruptly and sat down. As he took his seat and mopped his face, the congregation rustled with expectancy. One of the elders crossed over to old Moses and spoke to him in a low tone. The old preacher took no visible notice of him. He was apparently as oblivious of his presence as though he had been in a wilderness. He sat as still as if he were in a trance, and the elder had to lean over and take him by the arm before he moved. Then he apparently awoke. He rose with grave deliberation, and without looking at the audience advanced slowly to the desk. Here he paused and began a slow and solemn search through his raiment until from some deep and apparently almost inaccessible recess he extracted a large iron spectacle-case. From this he slowly took a pair of large silver-rimmed spectacles, which he solemnly and laboriously adjusted on his nose. It was the Thummim and the Urim of his profession and their adjustment partook of a rite.

His deliberation and confidence appeared to affect at least a portion of his audience, for first one, then another of the elderly sisters broke forth into exclamations of emotional rapture: "Um-mh! Yes, Lord!"

To the casual witness the old man might have appeared to take not the least notice of it, as, with profound solemnity, he proceeded to turn the leaves of the Bible back and forth, apparently hunting for his text. But a keen observer might have noticed the firmer setting of his strong jaw and the dilation of his nostrils. Still he took no more notice of the expressive outburst than he did of Simon's sudden shifting in his seat. He appeared wholly detached from them.

Having marked a number of places to his satisfaction, he turned back toward the beginning of the Bible and began to speak. "The tenth chapter of the first book of Moses," he announced slowly, and began to read with portentous solemnity the names of the generation of the sons of Noah. He had an abysmal voice and he read the long record of strange names with deep intona-

tion and with an ease which impressed mightily his less literate flock. Having performed this amazing task, to the manifest wonderment of his hearers, he turned the leaves and found another place.

"I will now read to you the miracles by which de Lord by de hand of Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt to de land of Canyan." He read slowly the story of Moses' call and the miracle of Aaron's rod swallowing the transformed rods of the magicians. For the first time he lifted his eyes from the book and addressed his audience. "De names of dem magicians is not set down hyah in dthis chapter," he said solemnly. "But Gord had 'em writ down in his everlastin' record and when de time comes he will tell 'em to you." Once more he turned the leaves and read a few verses about Simon the Sorcerer. Again turning a little further on, he read of the seven sons of Sceva, who attempted to exorcise, and of the man jumping on them. He closed the book. "And now," he said, "let us pray."

He was noted as a "clamorer at de

throne," no less than as a preacher, and, indeed, at times, except that he shut his eyes while engaged in the former exercise, one might have been at some trouble to distinguish the one from the other. To-night he was in full power and he had hardly begun before the effect on his hearers was profound. Beginning slowly and calmly at first, his sonorous voice soon rose to its full compass, and his utterances became more and more rapid, till the words poured forth in a volume too great for him to catch his breath, and he drew it in as if his throat had been a great suction pipe. Picturing the terrors of torment in lurid terms, he prayed for all before him—and he described them all as wicked and condemned and perishing sinners for whom he called on the God of Moses to come and save them from eternal torment and fetch them to the promised land.

He followed, in ringing and breathless sentences, the story of Moses through the journeyings and troubles in the wilderness; dwelt on the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and pictured the terrible death

of all who clave to them and went down quick into the pit. He recalled the fact that only two of all the men that left Egypt as God's chosen people had crossed the Jordan; and he pleaded for greater mercy now —praying that though God should "shake the rebellious sinners over hell till it singed their eyebrows and blistered their soles," he would not drop them into eternal torment.

The effect on his congregation was immediate. He was unconsciously using the language of the Psalms and the prophets, and as he intoned his sonorous sentences they began to sway and rock and respond with fervid groans and shouts.

Then suddenly, as a rumble of thunder rolled into a crash, Moses ceased.

Rising, he once more went through the rite of adjusting his glasses, opened his Bible and read his text: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh"—one more turn of the leaf— "And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven that there

may be hail in all the land of Egypt: upon man and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field throughout the land of Egypt."

He closed the book and facing slightly toward the west, after a moment, stretched his arm solemnly over Simon's head to where the sound of the thunder was growing louder and more instant. It manifestly made a deep impression, for the congregation gasped and gazed toward the western windows, where the sky was growing black with the swiftly coming storm. Simon shifted uneasily in his seat and glanced nervously toward the windows like the others. Moses, however, was as calm as the Sphinx. He turned and began to speak in a deep voice. With a simple directness he pictured the recent happiness and content of the people in their new freedom and their reliance on God, who had set them free, and their confidence in his word that had plucked them from the eternal torments of hell-fire and given them the hope of heaven with its golden streets and its rest beside the waters of comfort. He described

himself as the poor and stammering Moses who had been taken from the wilderness and sent to Pharaoh to bring them out of Egypt and lead them to the promised land— But Pharaoh had hardened his heart and had sent and brought his magicians to deceive them and keep them in bondage.

"And who was this deceiver?" he demanded. "Who was the magician?" He would tell them. He turned to one of the marks in his Bible and read slowly and impressively the account of Simon the Sorcerer. Closing the book he addressed them again: "Simon—not Simon Peter—but Simon the Sorcerer, who had thought that for money he could buy Jehovah—Simon who had deceived the people and led them away from Moses—led them back toward Egypt—back to the place where they were enslaved—back to the company of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, to be swallowed up quick in everlasting fire." His long, rhythmic sentences, in the very words of the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel, as he denounced curses upon them told on them more and more. He

Simon shifted uneasily in his seat

rang the changes on Simon—repeating the name at the end of sentence after sentence —Simon—who envied the apostles—Simon —who worked his charms and enchantment and called them miracles which only the apostles could perform—Simon, who said there was no hell, and so he could do all his wicked deeds and not be punished—"Simon —Simon—Simon—" he repeated, with ever-changing and ringing intonation till the congregation, thrilled by his resounding voice, rocked and swayed and shouted in unison, while the object of his attack shifted and shrank deep into his chair and tried in vain to appear unmoved.

"But there were several Simons— It would not do to make any mistake about the Sorcerer— There was Simon Peter and Simon Zelotes—and Simon the Cyrenian——"

At this moment the young man could stand it no longer— He rose suddenly.

"I hate to interrupt Brother Moses," he said, "but my name is neither Simon Peter nor Simon Zelotes—my name is Simon Jambers." A murmur of approval from some

younger members greeted his interruption —but it was hushed instantly as Moses with uplifted hand turned to him.

"Simon—what did you say?" he demanded in a solemn voice—"Simon Jones?" His glance took in the detective (who suddenly appeared to awaken to life) and then rested on Simon.

"Simon Jambers," said the other in a weakened voice, as the knowledge that he was known came to him.

"Simon Jambers!" repeated Moses in a deep voice. He turned to the congregation and catching up the big Bible opened it at a mark as if by accident and read slowly: "When Janes and Jambers withstood Moses—" He held the book out till it almost touched Simon's face. "Here it is," he thundered, "set down in de book—de very name!" He faced the congregation. "Didn't I tell you Gord had set it down in his everlastin' record! Jambers—Simon Jambers!" The stillness could be felt.

At this moment, after the dead calm, came the racing wind over the trees, whirling the

leaves before it, and shaking the house as if it would tear it from its foundations.

He turned back to the luckless Simon—"Thou spawn of Satan—thou offspring of hell and damnation—thou hast come back, hast thou, to withstand old Moses and try with thy serpent's guile to deceive this people jes' set free and lead 'em back to bondage to de flames of de fiery furnace! De hell thou hast derided is yawnin' for thee even now—de torment thou hast been sent from to work dthy evil spells is waitin' and blazin' and heated seven times seven to scorch and shrivel dthy po' yaller body and dthy miserable sin-blackened soul! Thou snake-bearer of Pharaoh and of sin—go get thee hence and let my people go!" He suddenly turned and stretched forth his arm with out-pointing, long, lean finger—"Behold de pillar of de cloud has come and de pillar of fire is approachin'!"

At this moment the storm broke and a peal of thunder, beginning with a terrific crash, rolled across the sky, shaking the building and startling the shouting and

swaying people. Many of them, with nerves already wrung and senses deluged with emotion, cried out in an agony of terror and began to pray aloud. But Moses was in his element. The more blinding the lightning and the louder the crashing of the thunder, the louder he proclaimed the judgment of Omnipotence against the sin of the sorcerer and all who sided with him. "Don't you hear 'em comin' for him!" he thundered. "Ain't dat de hail dat's rattlin' and de lightenin' a-runnin' along de ground?" And as the flashes merged into each other—so close were they: "Ain't death a-followin' in de track, and ain't dat de fo'-runner o' de fire of hell a-gleamin' and a-comin' nigher an' nigher for sinners ev'y minute?" And with each successive gust of the tempest and successive crash which rocked the building he called on his people to fall on their knees and repent—lest they be swept away, and swallowed up quick like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. He set the example and prayed fervently for pardon for the ignorant. Was there a Jonah in de

Ark? Let 'em arise and fling him out and save themselves from the wrath to come—even dtho' the great leviathan of hell was awaitin' to swallow him up.

Whether it was the apt allusion or for some other cause, with a sudden impulse from the overwrought multitude, the cry arose, "Fling him out! Fling him out!" And to the crashing of thunder and the glare of lightning those nearest the pulpit, with a shout, made a rush for the magician. But Simon Jambers did not wait. His nerve had already given way, and, as the wild rush was made for him, with a sudden leap of terror, he dashed for the low window at the side of the platform, sprang through it, and disappeared in the darkness of the storm.

A moment later the storm appeared to have passed, rolling on in the direction the sorcerer had taken. Moses, who had risen as the rush was made, held up his arm, and the tumult hushed down.

"De gates of hell was opened wide jes' now. Let us pray."

THE OUTCAST

We had fallen to talking, in the lawyers' room, of the effect of names on character, and my friend, an old counsellor of great distinction, advanced the singular theory that the assassination of Lincoln was directly traceable to the fact that the names of the Booths, father and son, were Junius Brutus and John Wilkes.

"I had a college mate named Brutus," he said after a moment of reflection, "and by a strange fate his life also appeared to have followed the line of historical parallels."

On being pressed for further explanation he told the following story.

"He was a marked man at college, with a force, both of body and mind, which had something of the sheer brute in it," said my friend, with a pull at his pipe, "and with an independence of intellect rather unusual among such gregarious animals as youth.

He was so independent and judicial in his views that we used to call him 'the judge' even then.

"His countenance indicated his character —resolution and strength—capable of an extreme in both virtue and vice—a broad brow, a powerful jaw, a large, mobile, rather sensual mouth, a strong nose, and piercing, dark, searching eyes. His hobby was philosophy, and he was the only man of our set that knew it even by its name. He read for pleasure Greek and German philosophy. He was fond of discussing ethics and he pronounced himself a man of high morality, though he certainly was not one according to ordinary standards. He declared the Mosaic code an elaborate and even a complicated one, and used to say that Christ had substituted for it a code at once simple and complete. He had reduced ten commandments to two—love of God and love of your neighbor as yourself; all the rest he declared an elaboration, and human.

"I recall even now his discussion on one occasion of the relative importance of vari-

ous forms of utility to the human race. Riches, he declared to be the most sordid conception of the human intelligence; while law was the loftiest. But of all forms, he maintained that the essential one was the propagation of species—that it was the true motive of all the ceremonial of civilization—that the maternal instinct was the chief force which had led to civilization, and would continue to advance it, and that the paternal instinct, which was largely developed only in man, was the next driving force. He further held that the obligation on the man was morally as strong in the case of illegitimacy as in the case of legitimate children. It was sheer cowardice, he declared, which prompted a man to disown one. I remember the heat—I might almost say 'passion'—with which he maintained this view—due, possibly, to the fact, which he mentioned, that he was the last of his family, and, so far as he knew, had not a relative in the world. He often declared he was 'as lonely as Adam.'

"When we started at the bar, his powers

soon enabled him to outstrip the rest of us. He went to the capital and after a few years he was spoken of as the coming man of the State, unless his dissipation, which was beginning to be a good deal talked of, should bar his advance. Finally, his life became such that most of his friends, while they deplored his abandonment, were obliged to withdraw their intimacy.

"He formed a connection, which was exceedingly disturbing to those who had enjoyed his society, and had looked to him to become the ornament of the bar. He became infatuated with the woman in question, a courtesan, by name, Antoinette Lapine, a woman of French extraction, as her name might imply, with marks of notable beauty still left—in her trim figure, and her delicate features—the nose rather long, lips full, the hair unusually abundant and glossy, and a sort of feline, almost serpentine, suppleness in her movements. Where she came from none of his friends ever knew, but from the first time he met her he appeared to have fallen completely under her

sway, and the connection between them soon became so notorious that he was not only excluded from all decent society, but was dropped by all of those who had claimed his friendship.

"He set up an establishment for her, having taken her out of the—eh—establishment where he first discovered her, and devoted himself to her so completely that he became the talk of the town, and was finally ostracised, as I say, by all except those who had known him in his youth, and even we held merely a nominal association with him.

"It was even said that he had married her. I think this debasement was the coup-de-grace which finally sent him down. Society will tolerate much; but not this. I did not know at the time whether this report were true or not. (It turned out not to be true.) About that time I moved West, and our association ceased. It was years afterward that I first heard, from a younger man, of his later career—his recovery and subsequent rehabilitation and success. He had broken off his illicit connection; had married

soon afterward, and his wife had died. He had been promoted to the bench, where he had promptly made a name.

"'There was some sort of scandal connected with him,' said my young friend. 'A woman had been infatuated with him—killed herself for him. I think he had broken off with her some months before. But that was twenty years ago—before my time. They say he never— However, I know nothing of the truth of that. He had an unhappy marriage I believe, and, after his wife's death, never married again. He is now the sternest of moralists, a terror to evil-doers, and the proudest man on earth.'

"'What sort of judge has he proved?' I asked.

"'They call him a just judge; but very stern.'

"'His name is Brutus,' I observed.

"'I never thought of that,' said he.

"A year or two afterward I happened to go back East, and visited my old home, only to find the sad disappointment which one is sure to find if one stays away too long.

Everything was altered. The houses where I had once been intimate had mostly changed hands. The men I had once known well had died or become absorbed in matters to which I was indifferent. The women I had admired had grown old and fat—or lean. It was altogether a sad visit for me, and the saddest part of it all was to feel that I, myself, had changed. I determined, therefore, to cut the visit short, but, having learned that my old friend's court was in session, and that an interesting case—the trial of a young woman for murder—was before him, which appeared to cause considerable excitement in the town, I sauntered up to the court-house and entered the room soon after the case was called.

"The room was filled with the usual nondescript—mainly morbid crowd that packs a court-room on such occasions with the bodies and stench of humanity. A little extra civility, however, coupled with the statement that I was a friend of the judge's who had called to see him, and proposed to send him my card at the first recess, secured

me a seat well in front to one side, where I could see and hear everything.

"I was soon informed as to the facts of the case by my next neighbor, an alert young attorney who had been drawn thither partly by interest in the case, but mainly by curiosity to witness a duel which he said was sure to take place between the opposing counsel, who, he informed me, were about the two cleverest young lawyers at the bar.

"From his account it appeared that the girl, who had some marks of beauty, was a young woman of the town, by name, Netta Thorne, who had become attached to a young man of some social position, who, after having been infatuated with her for a time, had finally thrown her over to marry. As he was on the point of marrying a young lady in his own set, the girl, after vainly endeavoring to win him back, had sought him out and shot him dead. Possibly she might have escaped, for no one saw the deed committed, but, instead, she had sat quietly beside the body till the police came, when she had given herself up, openly confessing the

deed and expressing her readiness to suffer the penalty of the law. When interrogated as to her motive, her only reply was, 'I loved him, and could not give him up.'

"'She wanted to plead guilty,' said my young informant, 'but the judge would not allow it. He knows his business. He ordered her plea withdrawn and appointed that young man there beside her to defend her. He isn't afraid. But it is a dead open-and-shut case; he hasn't a point. You see, she confessed everything, and she murdered him all right, too. All he can do is to throw himself on the mercy of the court, and God have mercy on her soul! The old judge there is of cast-iron! Besides, society must be protected. He knows it.'

"I took a good look at the judge, and, in truth, he appeared so. His proud, stern face was set like stone, his bulky frame, crowned by his massive head with its large features, gave an impression of strength, which might have been one of mere brute force but for the powerful chin, stern mouth, clear, bold, calm eyes, and commanding

brow, which stamped it with intellectual power. There was not a line of weakness, and hardly one from which might be argued the possibility of pity. The passion I had known in his youth had petrified into rock. He was simply a steel machine.

" 'Not cast-iron, but steel,' I said to my young neighbor.

" 'He is a just judge,' said he. 'He will maintain the law! Society must be protected.'

"I turned at this moment to look at the prisoner. She was a sad young thing (with marks of beauty of the Gallic type still left). She was sitting listlessly, sunk in an armchair provided for her to support her drooping frame, and of all the multitude she appeared to be the one least interested in what was taking place around her—of all, she and the judge appeared the most detached. She was a picture of mere woe. Dressed in a sort of dull black, which added to her pallor, her slender shoulders drooped as though under a weight; the white, thin, delicate and rather shapely hands lay list-

lessly in her lap. Her dark, weary eyes were downcast, and her long dark lashes rested on her wan cheeks, giving an air of abject wretchedness and indescribable loneliness. She had the look of one who had wept the fountain of tears dry. Even when her counsel, from time to time during the securing of the jury, leant over and spoke to her, her countenance expressed no change; she simply shook her head slowly—a barely perceptible recognition of his presence.

"He was a striking-looking, slim youth, with a fine brow, deep eyes, and a mobile, sensitive mouth, set somewhat firmly, and his pallor under the excitement of the case so weighty added to his interesting appearance.

"The jury secured, the indictment was read, and the girl was asked to plead. She said nothing. On being ordered to stand, she merely rose unsteadily to her feet and stood drooping. She did not even raise her eyes. She had the helpless quietude of a bound animal. Her counsel leant over toward her and said something. Then she

lifted her eyes for a moment and looked at the judge above her, his stern eyes fastened on her calmly, and her lips moved. 'Guilty,' she said, in what was rather like the shadow of speech than speech itself. The judge leant forward, his hand behind his ear.

" 'What?'

" 'She pleads "Not guilty,"' said the young lawyer at her side. The judge sat back and the jury shifted in their seats.

" 'Enter a plea of "Not guilty,"' said the judge sternly, and the trial proceeded.

"The attorney for the commonwealth presented his case clearly and forcibly. He was a man of ability and he knew the power of the enginery of the law that he commanded. 'It was a clear case,' he said, 'and, unhappily, not an unprecedented one. The prisoner was a woman of evil life, a lawbreaker by profession, a courtesan who had drawn a young man of good standing into her net, and, when, awaking to his folly, he strove to escape from her toils and lead a reputable life, she had boldly followed him up and maliciously shot him down, almost, as it were, on the very steps of the altar.

There was no question as to the facts, any more than there was as to the law. Society must be protected—he should ask the highest penalty of the law.'

"As he sat down, the throng in the courtroom rustled approval.

"The witnesses were examined—enough and to spare, for the deed had been done openly. The prisoner's former life was shown, from her earliest girlhood—the life of a common creature of the pavement. Then came the connection with the young man she had subsequently killed, his abandonment of her on the eve of his marriage, and then the 'tragedy,' as it was usually spoken of. She had left her place and had sought out her former lover, and, after a stormy scene, had killed him, and then had calmly awaited the arrival of the police and had—according to the officer put on the stand to prove her confession—'Boasted of her crime.'

"The young counsel for the prisoner, who up to this time had scarcely spoken a word, was on his feet in a second.

"'Boasted of what crime?'

" 'The murder.'

" 'What murder?' His voice was very quiet, but very clear.

" 'The murder of——'

" 'Stop, sir!' and from his deep eyes leaped a flame like a sudden drawn sword. 'She never boasted of murder. If you let that word pass your lips I, myself, will swear out a warrant against you for perjury, and prove it on you by every officer that was present that night. She never used that word. Whether there shall have been a murder committed is a secret locked in the bosoms of those twelve men. This young thing here, is at this moment, as free from the crime of murder as you are, and I am an officer of the law appointed by the court to see that she has the protection of the law. She shall have it this day by the help of God.' He leant over and instinctively put his hand on her shoulder and drew her toward him, and she instinctively or from sheer weakness leant against him. Every one sat up to peer at them. The trial suddenly entered on a new phase. I became

aware of a peculiar vibrant quality in his voice, that began to thrill the crowd, and stir the nerves. He soon had the officer explaining that he meant that she confessed to the shooting of her lover.

"Only one witness appeared at all friendly to the prisoner; that is, not utterly hostile to her—an old woman with an inaudible voice—connected with a house of refuge, who on cross-examination testified that she had seen her feeding the squirrels in a public square, and that she had told her of her childhood and her first acquaintance with, and subsequent love for, the man she had afterward killed. She had come once to the house of refuge, but her infatuation for the young man, who had written to her, had drawn her away again. There was put in evidence, a letter which the girl had written speaking of her madness for her lover and declaring that she could not live without him. The witness had known her mother before her—a poor creature, who, like this girl, had gone wrong, and had come to an untimely end. 'What was her mother's

name?' asked the prisoner's counsel. 'She was known as ——.' She spoke so low that no one could catch the name except the prisoner's counsel, who leant forward with his hand behind his ear.

"'The name makes no difference. She was a harlot, like her daughter?' demanded the prosecuting attorney sharply.

"'Yes, sir.'

The prisoner's counsel started to rise; but the judge, whose attention had been distracted for a moment, said firmly: 'The name is immaterial,' and he kept his seat, but a second later said: 'It may or it may not be.' 'I rule that it is,' said the judge sternly.

"'I will reserve the point,' nodded the young counsellor, looking him in the eye.

"This was the last witness, as the young counsel said simply that he had no other witnesses to examine.

"It seemed a clear case of murder, and the crowd evidently felt it to be so. There could be but one verdict; and so they manifestly declared in a murmur which spread

all over the court-room, until the judge sternly demanded silence. The instructions asked were elaborate and strong on the side of the people; on the other side, only one instruction was asked and even this was not argued. It was on the point of reasonable cause. The counsel for the State rose and spoke briefly but strongly, going over the ground that he had laid out in his opening statement, and calling the jury's attention to the evidence adduced and the testimony of witnesses who were on the side of the State. He closed by saying: 'Society must be protected.'

"Then, as he took his seat, the young counsel for the prisoner rose.

" 'He will throw his client on the mercy of the court,' muttered the young man at my side. But not so. He began to speak. 'He had no other witnesses for the defence,' he said, 'than those already examined. His client was quite alone in the world—the only friends she had were the squirrels she had fed, who could not testify on her behalf to her tender heart—even the poor harlots in

the kennel that was the only home she had ever known, were afraid to testify for her.'

"Then he went on elementally: the counsel for the State had said that she was a harlot and could not claim the defence of outraged womanhood; she was a harlot and had no womanliness to protect; she was a harlot and had no outraged virtue to avenge, no pride to inspire her to the deed. It was simply murder—cold-blooded murder. She had followed up and killed a man who had been kind to her—wilfully, deliberately, and maliciously. He discussed Malice for a moment, and then, with a gesture, threw it aside, and came to the facts.

"It was quite true that she was a denizen of a brothel—an outcast—more, she was the child of a brothel. Her mother was an outcast before her. But there was something in woman—stronger than pride, stronger than virtue, stronger than life—the one thing that had advanced the world. This was Love, and it had come to this poor creature—how, he did not know, but it had come even in the kennel in which she had lived.

It had lifted her out of the reek in which she had been born, and had placed her in a new world that was a new Heaven to her. A young man—not a very strong one, nor a good one, had come into her life and had opened a new world to her, a Heaven undreamed of before—the Heaven of Love. Weak as he was, he had created in her a heart. He was her God. She would have washed his feet in her heart's blood and have dried them with the tendrils of her soul. She withdrew herself from other men for his sake—from her companion outcasts. She struggled to hold onto her heaven, to be worthy of it, to be chaste in spirit, to be true to him, and, as she struggled and held on with all her new-born soul, he, the God of her idolatry, had taken her and dropped her back bodily into hell. As she clung to his feet he had torn loose her hands and kicked her back into perdition, and she in her frenzy had slain him. And now she was being tried for this act—how and by whom? By the law—not the law of God, which had been quoted—Christ forgave the

Magdalene and she wept with His mother at His cross. No, she is tried by the law of society, by the tribunal established by society, by society itself, which, in its hypocrisy, cast her out.

"It is a poor summary of what he said that I give. It was the man, not the words.

"'What chance,' he demanded, 'did she have; what chance had she ever had? She had been foredoomed from her birth; preordained to the life that she had led. What had society or law ever done for her? They had banished her to her foul den while they prayed and sang, and locked her in it as in a ghetto of perdition.

"'Her story was a simple one. She was conceived in sin; she was the child of a harlot, and of whom? He did not know. Of some man like this one, who had taken her up for his pleasure, and for his pleasure had cast her off. The tragedy of life had but repeated itself in this case. Her mother, like her, had been an outcast and, like her, had been given a glimpse of heaven through a man's love, and had seized upon it with

her famished soul. Like her, she had been betrayed, and, like her, at the instance of society had been dropped back into perdition with her child by that child's father, whoever he might be. In her despair she had destroyed herself. This child is the daughter of despair.'

"He stood away from her and left her in a space all by herself—a pitiful, little, shrunken wisp of a girl. 'There she sits,' he said, with his eyes on her, 'the embodiment, the incarnation of all the wrongs of womanhood throughout the ages—image of the holiest creation of God; born with the innocence of the babe, stamped with beauty, formed for motherhood. Abandoned by her father. Soiled, defiled by man for his mere pleasure; victim of his brutality; ruined for his lust; cast out for his selfishness, trampled on for his hypocrisy, and at last slain for his revenge. You may take her; she is wholly in your power. You may bind her little feet with irons, and strangle her poor voice with your instruments of vengeance, but by the justice of God, which

has been invoked here to-day, I forbid you to do it in the name of Him who knew the lives of those men who dragged before Him the sinning women taken for a death crime, and spared the Magdalene, and vouchsafed to her the first sight of His resurrected face. You may slay her and think to divide the responsibility among you; but each man of you must bear this alone, for one voice will save her, and when each of you has sent her to death, each of you shall one day meet her again when you shall stand yourself at that Bar to answer alone to that Judge to whom you shall have sent her to witness against you. He knows your lives, your hearts, and He will judge you. He knows who is this poor outcast's father. He may be living, or he may be dead, but he cannot escape Him!' He ceased for a moment, then recommenced:

" 'I know not who that father is or was, but if he be alive I summon him in the name of God to the bar of this court to defend his daughter's life. Though he be a member of this jury or the judge, there, on this bench'

(he turned and faced the judge) 'I summon, in the name not of mercy, but of justice, the lover of Antoinette Lapine, whose daughter's life stands in jeopardy this day, because of his abandonment of her.'

"Thrilled by his passionate appeal, I saw a strange look come suddenly over his face and fix his gaze in an indescribable realization of a sudden revelation. I looked at the same moment at the judge, and I saw the whole terrible truth suddenly sweep over him like a flood. His head stretched forward. His staring eyes were fastened on the prisoner's face. His bloodless lips moved. 'Antoinette Lapine!' he whispered. His sins had risen up against him. His face was the hue of death. It was his own daughter, harlot and murderess, who stood at his bar."

My friend ceased speaking, and, before any of us could interrupt him, he had put his pipe in his pocket and turned to the door, saying quietly: "Good-night, gentlemen."

"But, Colonel, what did the judge do?"

we asked. But all he said was: "Good-night, young gentlemen. To understand human nature you must read the annals of your profession."

END.